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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 25 Jun

NC0607065296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 25 June edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Report Examines Arab Summit, U.S. Attempts To Abort It
2. Law Amendment Applauded; President's Approach To Ruling Rejected
3. Egyptian-Israeli Industrialists Meeting 'Postponed Indefinitely'
4. 'Severe Restrictions' on University Professors Travel
5. Summit Communique Analyzed; Code of Action Suggested
6. MB Guide Pleased With Summit; Hopes Other Steps Will Follow
7. Columnist Urges Dialogue With Islamists
8. Trade Union Rejects Normalization With Israel
9. Rally Urges Holy Jihad Against Zionist-American Enemy
10. Sudan's al-Bashir Interviewed on Summit, Ties With Egypt

REPORT EXAMINES ARAB SUMMIT, U.S. ATTEMPTS TO ABORT IT

A 1,000-word report by Mahmud Bakri, page 1, examines the "clearly hostile position" the United States assumed on the Arab summit, noting the "purposeful" information the Americans promoted against Egypt as part of "punitive" measures to dissuade it from holding the summit. The writer also notes the U.S. threat to veto UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali's reelection.

The writer notes that the U.S. Administration "sent strongly worded warning messages to the leaders taking part in the summit to dissuade them from issuing a hostile statement against Israel."

Bakri points out that the United States laid out "a set of demands," which were all rejected by Egypt. It demanded that the summit refrain from pointing to the Israeli nuclear armament issue; condemn terrorist operations, particularly inside Israel; declare a desire to guarantee the success of the economic conference on regional cooperation with Israel; note the possibility of direct meetings between the Israeli prime minister and Arab leaders; and refrain from linking political and economic peace.

Noting that the summit "succeeded in reconciling Arab leaders," Bakri emphasizes that "the most important accomplishment was the reconciliatory and candid meeting between President Husni Mubarak and Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir." He adds that this meeting opened a new chapter in bilateral relations. Noting that certain sources described the meeting as "cordial at times and tense at others," he says that the two leaders agreed to refer disputes to competent officials.

He also notes that the presence of al-Qadhdhafi, al-Asad, and Yemen's Salih "played an effective role in helping the summit adopt specific and effective stances on the important issues."

LAW AMENDMENT APPLAUDED; PRESIDENT'S APPROACH TO RULING REJECTED

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus' 500-word column "the Natives," page 12, voices gratitude to the president of the republic for "eliminating the impact of aggression on the press." The writer also thanks the prime minister "who was honest as he buried the law that journalists complained about."

'Abd-al-Quddus believes that the People's Assembly deserves no thanks, since "the orders came from the government" and all the assembly did was to carry out these orders.

The writer says, however, that the problems of the Egyptian press have not ended, because the freedom to issue newspapers suffers from "severe restrictions and the state dominates the so-called national press." He notes that the abrogation of the text that precluded journalists above 60 years of age from assuming leading positions "removes barriers against young efficient journalists reaching high positions."

The columnist believes that the crisis proved that "the president of the republic is stronger than any other constitutional establishment" and that this provides "definite evidence to autocracy, to which we object." He notes that it was the president who ordered the restrictions on the press in the first place and it was him who rectified the situation. "Yes we thank the president of the republic, but we object to this approach in ruling Egypt," he says.

He draws the president's attention to "other forms of aggression that require his intervention." Of these, he cites the "outright war on the Islamist current and the trials of trade union leaders and university professors before military tribunals." He also cites "aggression on the public sector by selling it in the absence of a well-considered plan."

He wonders if the president will also intervene to eliminate these aggressions.

EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI INDUSTRIALISTS MEETING 'POSTPONED INDEFINITELY'

A 200-word report by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Mun'im, page 1, says that a meeting between the Egyptian and Israeli industrialist unions has been postponed "indefinitely" because of "a state of caution and anticipation of what might happen in the next few days, and a vagueness surrounding the fate of the peace process and normalization with Israel under Netanyahu's extremist government."

The meeting was supposed to coordinate the efforts of investors in the spinning and weaving, foodstuff, and engineering industries, and to lease some spinning and weaving factories to Israeli investors.

'SEVERE RESTRICTIONS' ON UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS TRAVEL

An unattributed 100-word report on page one says that the education minister issued a decree "imposing severe restrictions" on the travel of university professors. The decree obliges professors to obtain permission for travel, even on their annual leave, and to submit their passports to the university on their return so that their itinerary can be entered on record.

SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE ANALYZED; CODE OF ACTION SUGGESTED

Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn's 5,000-word article, page 2, analyzes the final communique of the Arab summit and suggests a code of action to follow after the summit.

He states that the communique was "strong," since it had reverberations in Israel, represented in Netanyahu's "concerns and denunciations."

The writer sums up the "positive aspects" of the communique in the following:

- It determined the minimum Arabs can accept; namely, Israel's withdrawal from all the lands occupied in 1967, and from Lebanon, and rejection of all forms of Zionist settlement;

- It committed Arabs to the Palestinians' right to self-determination and an independent state;

- It implied the possibility of "slowing down or halting normalization" if Israel fails to comply;

- It stressed the need to settle the refugee problem;

- It demanded the elimination of Israel's nuclear weapons;

- It voiced commitment to launch the Arab common market project;

- It assumed a stance on the Turkish-Israeli agreement;

- It insisted on Iraq's indivisibility;

- It supported Libya, demanded the lifting of the embargo, and implied that Arabs "might lift the embargo unilaterally";

- It emphasized people's right to resist occupation and aggression and denounced attempts to identify national resistance as terrorism; and,

- It voiced commitment to launch an Arab arbitration system to resolve disputes.

Turning on to the "negative aspects" of the communique, Husayn sums them up as follows:

- Arabs did not need to test the Likud government before slowing down or halting normalization with Israel, which "is wrong from the Islamic, national, and pan-Arab viewpoints." "We believe that the new spirit stimulated by the summit must reflect immediately at least in halting any expansion of normalization when the Israelis deliberately delay or slow down the peace process," he says, adding that the economic summit slated for Cairo in November "must be postponed" and that negotiations to sell Egyptian natural gas to Israel "must stop";

- The communique's paragraph on Iraq, "although it reiterated Iraq's territorial integrity... was more like one phrased by the U.S. State Department." "We hope Iraq's presence will be definite in any coming Arab meeting," Husayn says.

- "Prejudice against Iran was more evident than that against Turkey, although Islamic Iran provides a strategic depth to Arabs, while secular Turkey conspires with Israel against us," Husayn says. He adds that Bahrain disturbances are "a domestic problem associated with an assault on democracy" and that the problem of the United Arab Emirates islands should be resolved through "calm negotiations." He adds that the United States "is using the Bahrain incidents and the three islands' issue to launch a media campaign against Iran to isolate it from Arabs and prepare for a military strike against it."

- The communique failed to mention inter-Arab border disputes, which foreign powers might use to occupy Arabs in trivial issues and thus distract them from major ones.

Majdi Husayn concludes that the "scale is tipped in favor of the positive aspects."

He cites French Leader De Gaulle in his handling of the French-U.S. relations to conclude that "the policy of international relations is based on the actual balance of power and not on statements, official speeches, or declarations of intention." Applying this to the Arabs and Israel, he finds that "the gap is still wide" and that Arabs should embark on "some kind of coup" to benefit from the nation's potentials and obtain their lawful rights.

The writer believes that the Israel-American concern as a result of the summit is "a healthy sign," because it indicates that Arabs have taken a step "in the right direction."

He states that Peres' failure and other regional developments that stimulated hostility to the Israeli and American policies have caused "a temporary imbalance in the American domination of the region's resources." This imbalance can be eliminated or developed in favor of Arabs if they make up their minds, he says.

Husayn sums up the American reaction to the summit in the following:

- The kings and princes who boycotted the summit were influenced by American pressures seeking to undermine the summit;

- Clinton sent warning messages to the summit leaders that "they should not touch normalization or Israeli nuclear weapons";

- When Egypt refused to comply with these demands, some U.S. officials "indicated the possibility of imposing sanctions on Egypt";

- The United States synchronized the timing of its maneuvers with Jordan and Qatar with the summit to tell Arabs that they meet "to talk" while the American war machine "works";

- The American navy continued to harass Iranian ships in the Gulf;

- The U.S. media escalated a campaign against Syria, "suddenly recalling that Syria was still on the list of terrorist states, in an attempt to blame it for obstructing a regional settlement and absolve the Likud of that charge";

- The U.S. Administration "deliberately" raised fears in Syria when a U.S. official "leaked reports on possible military skirmishes on the Syrian-Turkish borders."

As for Israeli reaction, Husayn explains it in the following:

- The "most prominent" development was the military alliance with Turkey and the establishment of air bases near the borders with Iraq, Syria, and Iran. He says that the Israelis suggested Turkey invade Syria and establish a security strip similar to that in south Lebanon. According to Husayn, Turkey rejected the idea to avoid escalation with Arabs and because the experience failed in Lebanon;

- On the eve of the summit, the Israeli troops "advanced outside the occupied border strip" and arrested a number of Lebanese civilians;

- Israel continues its policy to judaize Jerusalem;

- Once the summit ended, Israel announced the allocation of $0.5 million for building settlements on the Syrian Golan Heights; and,

- Israel announced that it will go ahead with building a new nuclear reactor on Egyptian border.

Husayn believes, however, that "all these American moves and Israeli provocations... can go down the drain if Arabs make up their minds to maintain the unity of their political stance, insisting on halting normalization, and rebuilding their military and economic power."

Stating that "clearing disagreements" was among the most tangible accomplishments of the Arab summit, he believes Arabs should embark on the "daring step of ending Iraq's isolation."

Suggesting a code of action, Husayn believes that "the normalization card takes on special significance at this stage, until Arabs, particularly Egypt, restore their military and economic strength." He agrees that all-embracing conciliation and rallying Arabs is important, but he stresses that Egypt "cannot do without a solid nucleus of hawks, because engaging Israel in any controversy is not easy and needs good preparation." As a starting point, he demands that "the export of cheap Silicon sands to Israel be stopped" so that the material can be used in the local electronic industries and accordingly help the economy cope with this age.

He also believes that Egypt should urge the establishment of a common Arab market, with a common customs area open for new members.

Husayn underlines the need to "review the fight against the Islamic current, which is a strategic reserve in the face of foreign challenges." He notes here that the new Israeli Government involves "religious parties." He believes that the summit's support for the Islamic Jihad in Palestine was an important step. But he stresses the need for an "internal conciliation with the Islamic parties that do not pursue a violent approach." He suggests President Mubarak issue a "general pardon" and call off military tribunals, and emphasizes the need for "conciliation with all the currents of political and intellectual life" to get ready for outside dangers.

MB GUIDE PLEASED WITH SUMMIT; HOPES OTHER STEPS WILL FOLLOW

Muslim Brotherhood [MB] General guide Mustafa Mashhur, in his 1,500-word article on page 5, relates the series of events that led to the Arab summit and hopes it will mark "a turning point in our policy against the enemy and a first step to be followed by other steps."

Mashhur is "pleased" at the meetings, that were held on the sidelines of the summit, to eliminate differences and unite Arabs. Hoping everyone will realize that the danger does not involve the Palestinians, the Lebanese,or the Syrians alone, he notes that a united Arab-Islamic stance can "force the enemies to review their schemes and bridle their ambitions." He also hopes the United States will realize that "it is better for it not to antagonize these people..."

The writer stresses that Arab and Islamic states must "cement" ties between the regimes and the people, eliminate internal differences, increase freedoms, and benefit from the collective energies of the people."

He also hopes Arab states "will not fear the power of the enemy and whoever supports him, because unity will scare the enemy."

Hoping the summit is just "the beginning of a new era of dignity, strength, and independence that will revive the joint defense pact and establish a common Arab market," he regrets the absence of some Arab leaders.

Praising Mubarak's speech at the closing session of the summit, he hopes the meanings expressed in the speech will take effect in all Arab states without obstruction.

COLUMNIST URGES DIALOGUE WITH ISLAMISTS

Ahmad al-Suyufi's 500-word column "A Vision", page 6, views the Arab summit that was held in Cairo recently. He believes that even if the summit failed to achieve the objectives on its agenda, it achieved greater goals when it brought together Mubarak and al-Bashir, al-Asad and 'Arafat, and Jordan and Syria. "It is enough success for the summit that our governments realized that we have one enemy; namely Israel, who lays in waiting for us and rides the train of peace to get to the battlefield; an enemy that raises olive branches and kills us with the Grapes of Wrath."

Stating that President Mubarak largely succeeded in running the summit, he warns the president that Egypt will be targeted by the United States because it dared to hold the summit against its will. He believes that the president should "heal the domestic schism" by ending the crisis with the Islamists just as he did with journalists, because "it is the Islamists who can confront America and Israel." He urges the president to "initiate dialogue with the Islamists, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Labor Party, and all the factions that agree to dialogue."

He asserts that "we will succeed in everything if we adopt the dialogue approach."

TRADE UNION REJECT NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL

An unattributed 150-report on page 6 says that "engineering industries workers reject any measure to normalize with trade unions in Israeli, so long as Israel continues to occupy Arab lands in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine."

A statement by the union's general assembly said that the suffering of the Libyan and Iraqi people as a result of the embargo is "no longer justified." The statement underlined the need for inter-Arab cooperation to utilize the potentials of Arab states and form a bloc instead of engaging in "useless regional blocs such as the Middle East market."

The statement pointed to the harm involved in the economic reform program, calling for curbing its impact on the working class.

RALLY URGES HOLY JIHAD AGAINST ZIONIST-AMERICAN ENEMY

A 2,500-word report by Subhi Buhayri, page 8, gives an account of a rally called for and hosted by the Labor Party, in its branch in Alexandria, to draw up "a working charter for the Arab summit."

Addressing the rally, Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn urged all political powers to "raise the banner of holy jihad against the Zionist-American enemy and support mujahidin on all the battle fronts against the enemy in a war that targets their creed and stability."

Husayn stressed that "we are not in a weak position like some people think," and that "the Arab leaders meeting in Cairo have taken a good step toward confrontation."

Speaking at the same rally, in the name of the Muslim Brothers, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mun'im said that the sacrifices Islamists made are great and that they were all for the sake of giving supremacy to the word of God. He added that "the enemies who tried to infiltrate our ranks... still harbor all hatred and animosity to us because they know that our strength lies in going back and holding on to our creed."

He urged the government to take the first step toward reconciliation by "immediately releasing all prisoners of opinion, backing the loyal popular powers, and breaking the fetters restricting preachers and intellectuals."

Other rally speakers stressed the need to "involve the people" in confrontation with the enemy and release freedom of expression.

SUDAN'S AL-BASHIR INTERVIEWED ON SUMMIT, TIES WITH EGYPT

Page 3 features a 1,500-word interview in Cairo with Sudanese President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir by Tal'at Rumayh, in which he views the Arab summit, his meeting with President Mubarak, and the situation in south Sudan.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 28 Jun

NC0707162696

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 June edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Profound Differences Reported in Mubarak-Christopher Talks
2. Labor's Husayn Praises Summit, Mubarak; Warns of Military Strikes
3. Muslim Scholar: Suicide Operations Permissible
4. Scud, Summit Issues, U.S.-Egyptian Ties Viewed
5. Cartoon Shows U.S. Octopus on Top of UN Building
6. Labor Party Appeals to Mubarak on Brotherhood's Behalf

PROFOUND DIFFERENCES REPORTED IN MUBARAK-CHRISTOPHER TALKS

This issue's lead story is a 1,500-word report by Mahmud Bakri on pages 1 and 8 about the U.S. Secretary of State's recent talks with President Mubarak in Cairo, which the paper says revealed "very profound differences in points of view." It says Mubarak warned the U.S. secretary not to adopt the new Israeli Government's attitudes, as this will undermine peace. He also turned down an offer from Israel to conclude an economic cooperation agreement with it that would benefit Egypt significantly, in return for Egyptian assistance in opening the Arab region to Israel. Mubarak said only real peace can bring normal relations. He also refused to help arrange a meeting between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, saying this is not possible without Israeli willingness to withdraw from the Golan Heights. The report says Mubarak urged the United States to be impartial and refuted Christopher's view that the Arab summit adopted a hardline attitude, noting that the summit emphasized the Arab commitment to peace.

The issue's largest banner headline, in blue letters, reads: "Mubarak warns Christopher and Describes the Israeli Statements as a Call to War."

This is followed by another banner headline in smaller black type saying: "The President Canceled a News Conference With Christopher After the U.S. Secretary Raised the Missile Issue."

LABOR'S HUSAYN PRAISES SUMMIT, MUBARAK; WARNS OF MILITARY STRIKES

In a 4,000-word article on page 5 Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn comments on the outcome of the Arab summit held in Cairo on 22 and 23 June.

Speaking on behalf of the Labor Party, Husayn expresses joy at the convening of the summit and recalls that "for several years we have been calling on the nation of Arabs and Muslims and their rulers to rise above secondary internecine differences and devote themselves to the main arena of confrontation with the U.S.-Zionist alliance."

'Adil Husayn declares that the Labor Party's opposition to the Madrid conference, which ushered in the Middle East peace process, was not an opposition to its principles but to the fact that the Arabs were embarking on negotiations with Israel at a time when they were weak.

He says: "Following the Gulf war, the balance of power between us and the enemies was seriously upset. Israel was at the peak of its military power (with conventional and nuclear arsenals) and the United States was at the height of its ecstatic arrogance in the wake of the virtual collapse of the Soviet Union. It inaugurated its sole leadership of the world order by forming a global alliance against Iraq, and with utmost haughtiness was placing all its power on the side of Israel."

He deplores the "impotent and misshapen agreement" signed by the PLO, the subsequent Jordanian agreement with Israel, and the isolation of the Syria-Lebanon axis, which "did not submit to threats or accept surrender."

Husayn then says that the "U.S.-Zionist alliance," feeling that it "was on top of the world," started thinking of sidelining Egypt, even though it had helped pave the way for negotiations. He notes that Israel began calling for establishing a Middle East organization to replace the Arab League.

He continues: "Attempting to marginalize Egypt's role did not seem enough. Matters got to the point where threats were made to blockade it and even wage military strikes against it, if it objected to what was happening around it."

'Adil Husayn then notes that despite the Arabs' initial weakness, the persistent disagreements among the Arab countries, and the fact that Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Sudan, "a minority which rejected the ongoing agreements and measures of capitulation were under a starvation siege," conditions were improving. He says that the "courageous rejection front, both on the level of governments and people, was growing stronger and more outspoken" and in the meantime the superiority of the "enemy camp" was gradually eroding. He adds that the change was accelerated by suicide operations, "the divine weapon of martyrdom," which drew Israeli reprisals in the form of the blockade of the Palestinian territories and the attack on Lebanon, which included the "Qana massacre."

Rather than "halt armed resistance," the attack on Lebanon rallied Arab and Muslim hearts and was the "actual prelude to the Arab summit in Cairo."

"The confusion in the enemy ranks brought the Likud Bloc to power on the imagined grounds that it is better able to handle the deteriorating situation in Israel. Yet despite the new and hysterical Israeli threats and the psychological war waged by the Likud, the nerves of the Arab-Islamic ranks did not waver. Indeed, we responded to the challenge with a counter challenge. The final hurdles and reservations that had prevented the meeting of the Arab kings and presidents in past years collapsed and the historic summit was held. We have always said: The mere convening of the summit will create a new situation in the Arab-Islamic nation and the world. This new situation will, God willing, be like a snowball that grows bigger and more dangerous as it rolls forward."

Husayn recalls how "U.S. pressure used to be the main barrier to a meeting of Arab rulers" and how the Alexandria minisummit between President Mubarak, King Fahd, and Syria's al-Asad was "arranged secretively" in a way that "surprised the enemies." This time, he says, the Damascus summit was announced in advance and so was the Cairo summit. This happened, he declares, not because "the conspiracies and pressures" had stopped, but because "the Arab rulers' ability to reject and withstand these pressures" had grown.

Citing other factors that paved the way for the summit, he says: "The aggression against Lebanon was a significant prelude to the Cairo summit and provided an opportunity for France to intervene, in addition to the United States, (for the first time) in the affairs of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

He refers to France's role in securing the cease-fire in Lebanon, after the Israeli attacks, and cites EU, Russian, and Chinese support for the summit. He notes: "This means that four of the five major powers at the UN Security Council have proclaimed their solidarity against U.S. arrogance and the U.S. insistence on isolating and attacking us."

Although Husayn declares that the summit did not "realize our maximum hopes," it was "a big step in the right direction" notably with regard to the fact that it restored Egypt to its leading role in the Arab world.

On this he comments: "Egypt's reassumption of this status will nullify all the conditions that had fragmented the Arabs and made possible the dictation of unjust agreements. The early signs of this radical change were evident in the very fact that the summit was convened. More than the favorable conditions, more than the bracing challenges, the decisive factor in encouraging the hesitant countries to attend the summit was the role played by President Mubarak."

Noting that the morale of the Arab nation is currently high, he expects further "armed resistance operations in the occupied territories, especially in the wake of the frank political support by the Arab kings and presidents."

He also expects fierce retaliation from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, but says that this will not faze the Arabs:

"We must expect this and the response should not be a counteroffensive by regular Arab armies. It is enough if these armies stand fast and defend their borders. Our people will stand behind these armies and absorb any material and human losses. In return our mission is to sap the enemy's strength and this can be done by the heroes of the martyrdom resistance operations. And you will see how God will strike fear into the disbelievers' hearts and demonstrate to Netanyahu and his companions that their arrogance will extract from their people a bloody price that they cannot tolerate."

He says he hopes that the U.S. Administration will behave differently than Netanyahu's government. He urges the United States to find a political solution to the recent spate of bombings against American targets in Saudi Arabia.

"You will not succeed in protecting your lives and interests by merely stepping up security measures and holding conferences to condemn terrorism. If you are earnest, then help the Saudi rulers and spare them embarrassment by amending your policies and relying on Arab and Islamic forces to defend Saudi security rather than relying on your forces, which are allied with

Israel. If you are capable of reasoning, you will see that this is the road to your salvation."

Turning to President Husni Mubarak, he praises him for rallying the Arabs and warns him that he is in personal danger because of his pan-Arab stands, hinting at the same time that the Americans killed King Faysal of Saudi Arabia following the oil embargo that accompanied the October 1973 war between Egypt and Israel.

"I say this with the utmost seriousness: Mr. President, continuing to defy the U.S.-Zionist scheme poses a military threat to Egypt and a personal threat to you. We ask God to protect you, but this does not preclude the need to adopt appropriate precautions."

He implies that Mubarak enjoys broad popular support and declares: "Our nation is in great peril and you, your excellency, are at the heart of the danger. Yes, you are undertaking an arduous task, but you are enjoying unprecedented support. From your position you can do much. I ask God to give you success, your excellency, before the opportunity slips by and we find ourselves facing catastrophes for which we are not prepared."

It is noteworthy that one of the banner headlines on page 1 reads: "Your Excellency, Mr. President. God Has Rallied the Arabs Through Your Efforts... But the Dangers are Great."

MUSLIM SCHOLAR: SUICIDE OPERATIONS PERMISSIBLE

Over a half-page spread on page 9, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a noted Egyptian Muslim scholar and academic associated with the University of Qatar, outlines in a 2,000-word article his religious ruling, Fatwa, that suicide operations against Israeli targets are permissible.

The article has the following headlines: "The Most Recent Fatwa by the Leading Proponent of the Middle Way and Islamic Moderation, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi. After Reviewing the Opinions of the Nation's Imams and Jurisprudents Throughout History: Martyrdom Operations in Occupied Palestine Represent One of the Greatest Forms of Jihad for the Sake of God."

Most of the article is taken up by quotes from jurisprudents of the past, commenting on the Koranic injunction "and make not your own hands contribute to your destruction," which to some interpreters is a prohibition against suicide or against engaging in an unequal battle where the attacker is almost certain to die. Most of the authorities he quotes allow suicidal or near-suicidal attacks by one man against a large number of the enemy, if the attacker believes he has a chance of staying alive or if he believes he can inflict a substantial loss on the enemy although his own death is certain.

Al-Qaradawi himself declares: "Calling these operations suicide operations is an erroneous and misleading description. They are sacrificial, heroic, and martyrdom operations, totally detached from the concept of suicide. He who carries them out does not at all have the psychological disposition of a suicide. A suicide kills himself, but this one kills himself for the sake of his religion and nation. A suicide is a person who despaired of himself and of God, but this Mujahid is full of hope in God's mercy and beneficence."

He says: "Israeli society is a military society. Its men and women are soldiers in its army and can be summoned up for service at any moment. If a child or old person is killed in these operations, this is not intentional but accidental. The necessities of warfare permit forbidden actions."

He concludes his article with these words: "All we ask is that these martyrdom operations be carried out after careful consideration and an examination of their pros and cons. It is best if this is undertaken through the collective intellectual effort of reliable Muslims. If they decide that there is benefit in going ahead, they would do so and place their trust in God."

SCUD, SUMMIT ISSUES, U.S-EGYPTIAN TIES VIEWED

AL-SHA'B devotes pages 2 and 3 of this edition to a collection of related reports, each with its own headline, but all grouped under a banner heading that says: "The United States is Trying to Besiege Egypt... and Israel is Swallowing up Jerusalem."

Under the headline "Strategists and Politicians Say that the Motive Behind the U.S. Campaign Against Egypt Is To Guarantee Israeli Superiority Over All the Arabs Put Together" the paper publishes a 500-word report on page 2 soliciting the opinions of several Egyptian experts and journalists over the Scud missile issue. The report is written by Jamal Imbabi.

Amin Huwaydi, "strategist," and former head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service, advises: "We must not heed the Israeli and U.S. statements. What is important is to get missiles that can reach the heart of Israel."

Major General Tal'at Musallam, "military expert," and moderator of the Labor Party's Political Bureau, urges that preparations be made to do without U.S. economic aid, to acquire modern technology, and to forge greater inter-Arab cooperation.

Journalist Muhammad Sayyid Ahmad remarks: "In light of Netanyahu's statements, there is no longer a political settlement."

He adds that Netanyahu seeks Arab compliance with the Israeli concept of security and its requirements, "even if this fully contradicts pan-Arab security."

Wafa' Hijazi, a former assistant foreign minister, says: "The fact is that Netanyahu's government is a clear and frank expression of the hostility regrettably harbored by the majority of Israelis against the Arabs." He says that Israel, nevertheless, confronts "an Arab nation with a united will that is determined to regain its usurped rights."

In another 500-word report by Khalid Yunus and Dawud Hasan on page 2, which bears the headline "Muslim scholars: The Jews Know Nothing Except Treachery and Betrayal," the views of several religious scholars are solicited:

Shaykh Mahmud 'Abd-al-Wahhab Fayid, director general of shari'ah societies remarks: "The Koran tells us that the Jews keep no covenant and do not fulfill their pledges."

He warns the Arab rulers to be wary of the Jews and to unite "against the enemy."

Muslim preacher Dr. 'Abd-al-Rashid Saqr declares: "The Jews are like vipers that spew venom against those who do good to them."

Dr. Sayyid Rizq al-Tawil, former dean of the School of Religious Disciplines, says that the Israeli prime minister's declarations that he will not implement UN resolutions is a "challenge to the Arabs." He advises the Arabs to base their policy on the understanding that the "Jews break covenants and promises and are not advocates of peace."

Also on page 2 is a 1,200-word report by Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid called "An Israeli Project to Judaize Jerusalem Definitively by 2002."

The report speaks of "a secret Israeli blueprint" to impart a Jewish character to Arab East Jerusalem by seizing Arab land, restricting the building of new Arab housing, erecting large numbers of new houses for Jews, and buying some Arab houses in clandestine transactions. The aim, the report says, is to ensure a permanent Jewish majority in the Arab part of the city.

A 500-word article by Rabi Shahin on page 3 says that the "U.S. Administration fired off a flagrant accusation and allegation against Egypt" just as the Cairo summit was about to open. The reason, Shahin says, is that Washington is not happy with Cairo's policy toward Sudan, Iran, and Libya. He notes that Egypt has opposed the tightening of sanctions against Khartoum, has maintained a sober attitude towards Iran and refused to create tensions with it, and consistently defended Libya.

Shahin writes: "Cairo has expressed astonishment at the U.S. stance against it at a time when the United States is providing unlimited military assistance to Israel that includes all types of weapons, aircraft, missiles, and sophisticated technology."

An unattributed 1,500-word report on page three bears the headline: "In Response to the Arab Summit and the Egyptian Defense of Libya and Sudan, the United States Provoked the Scud Missile Crisis."

The report says that this is the fifth crisis between the United States and Egypt since President Bill Clinton's election. It names the four earlier crises as the one that followed the tension in Egyptian-Israeli and Egyptian-U.S. relations when Egypt refused to sign the extended Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unless Israel also signed it; the second followed a U.S. accusation to Egypt that it was expanding its cooperation with Libya despite the embargo on it; the third came in the wake of the Republican takeover of both houses of the U.S. Congress and the subsequent call to reduce foreign aid; and the fourth was in the run-up to the UN International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in Cairo in late 1994.

Speaking of the Scud missile issue, the report says that the United States overlooks Israel's possession of the 1,500-km Jericho-3 missile and other ballistic weapons, but says that Egypt's acquisition of Scuds "contravenes the U.S. Foreign Aid Bill" and is cause for cutting off this aid.

The report adds: "It is evident that this U.S. step came in response to Egypt's assumption of the leadership of the Arab bloc and its management of the Arab summit, which adopted several resolutions that Washington believed contradicted its totally pro-Israel policy, particularly the resolution threatening to reconsider the peace steps with Israel."

The report concludes: "The Scud missile crisis was not the first and will not be the last. Egypt, after all, was accused of manufacturing chemical weapons early in President Mubarak's rule just because it froze its economic ties with Israel. Doubtlessly these crises will strengthen inter-Arab cooperation and solidarity and even spur the efforts to rally Arab ranks and end inter-Arab disputes in order to confront our combined destiny versus the increasing U.S. eagerness to serve Israeli interests."

CARTOON SHOWS U.S. OCTOPUS ON TOP OF UN BUILDING

Alongside the above articles and reports is a 2-column, five-inch cartoon on page 3 showing an octopus in an Uncle Sam top hat sitting on a multistory building with the words "United Nations" written on it and wrapping its tentacles around it.

LABOR PARTY APPEALS TO MUBARAK ON BROTHERHOOD'S BEHALF

A 300-word "Appeal to His Excellency President Mubarak" on page 1, printed in large type and spread over several columns at the bottom of the page calls on the president to release detained Muslim Brotherhood members and halt the military trial of members of the al-Wasat Party.

The appeal says: "The Muslim Brothers represent a respected and significant force among the Egyptian and Arab masses. If they have freedom to engage in political activity, this will add much strength to our domestic front."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Delivers Speech at OAU Summit

JN0907103096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat warned that the Israeli Government's adherence to the new declared positions and its pursuit of a policy of siege and economic strangulation would waste the peace efforts and destroy the entire peace process.

In a speech at the inauguration of the 32d session of the Organization of African Unity [OAU], which opened in Yaounde yesterday, the president emphasized that achieving a just and comprehensive peace and adhering to all the agreements signed with Israel is the strategic option of the Palestinian people.

The president demanded that the Israeli Government adhere to the signed agreements, stressing the importance of this for protecting the peace process and preventing a stalemate. The president said he is confident that the conference's results and decisions will support the Cairo summit's emphasis on the need to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and protect it from any attempts to circumvent its principles and foundations.

The president said the African summit will boost Afro-Arab solidarity and cooperation. He thanked African nations for their support of the Palestinian people. He said the Palestinian Authority supports the reelection of Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali for a second term as UN secretary general.

President 'Arafat also met South African President Nelson Mandela on the sidelines of the African summit. They reviewed the latest developments in the region in light of the decisions of the recent Arab summit. The two leaders discussed ways to enhance bilateral ties to serve the interests of both peoples.

President 'Arafat also met with the president of Guinea, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Initiating National Dialogue Between PA, Opposition

TA0807124896 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 4 Jul 96 p 7

[Report by Munir 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, QUDS PRESS — Sources in the Palestinian opposition have said that moves and contacts are being conducted by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], led by George Habash, with the aim of preparing a national dialogue and achieving reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and opposition factions.

The sources added to QUDS PRESS that the PFLP has launched official contacts with the PA's leadership, Fatah, which is the largest PLO faction, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine to arrange official national dialogue meetings. The aim of the dialogue is to reach a comprehensive national agreement that overcomes internal differences; draw up a new political program based on the struggle against the Israeli occupation; and realize the Palestinian demands of the right of return, self-determination, the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, the achievement of sovereignty, and the evacuation of settlements. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: AL-NAHAR Views Netanyahu's U.S. Visit, Meeting With Clinton

TA0807152096 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 7 Jul 96 p 3

[Editorial: "The Clinton-Netanyahu Summit Is the Test"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Despite the concern in Palestinian circles about the peace process and its possible failure and collapse as a result of the intransigence and extremism of the positions of the Likud government led by Netanyahu, what induces us not to feel despondent and pessimistic are the positive signs that have appeared in the wake of three summits. Those are the G-7 summit, the European summit, and Cairo's Arab summit. All the summits dealt with the Middle East situation and ended with positive results. They supported the land-for-peace principle and urged the parties to implement the peace agreements and advance the peace process on all the Arab-Israeli tracks. They also called on the new Israeli leadership not to back down from the stages that have been realized on the path of peacemaking. Another sign is the upcoming meeting between U.S. President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. It is certain that the two leaders will focus on a plan that ensures convergence on firm bases preventing a retreat from the peace process — even if differences in positions were to arise between Clinton and Netanyahu, although the latter cannot oppose the U.S. perception and interests.

What is reassuring is that President Clinton blessed and supported the statement issued by the European summit, which affirmed the land-for-peace principle. Despite the fact that the Clinton-Netanyahu summit will not be easy, Clinton, who is involved in an election campaign, needs to show successes in his foreign policy before the American people. He will not accept that Israel wreck his administration's achievements in this sensitive region of the world. Although Clinton is eager to gain the affection of American Jews in a bid to obtain their votes, there is no doubt that he will be firm in his stance and will reiterate to Netanyahu that he still can do a lot even during an election campaign. Moreover, Netanyahu, who understands the American political game, will certainly not risk facing the enmity of Clinton and his government. If Netanyahu is betting on keeping the negotiations and the peace process suspended until after the U.S. elections in the belief that Clinton will not pressure Israel until then, the fear of all observers in the region is that this could lead to a renewed outbreak of violence and a retreat from the achievements of the agreements that are moving the peace process forward. Furthermore, the Arab parties fear that the suspension of the peace process might lead to a fait accompli situation, whereby Israel would exploit this opportunity to increase the settlements and harassments against Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem and attempt to empty the city of its legitimate inhabitants.

President Clinton should convince Netanyahu of the perils that will arise from the suspension of the peace process, and also convince the Israeli leadership of the threats to the region's security and stability that will accompany such a freeze. Pressuring Netanyahu to activate the peace process is, in the end, an Israeli interest. The peace process, whether on the Palestinian track or the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, must not stop. The U.S. Administration is not concealing its concern that Netanyahu might return all the negotiations conducted until now to square one. It is clear that Washington is in a state of confusion because it betted on the victory of the Labor Party, led by Peres, but his opponent won. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: AL-QUDS Terms Husayn-'Arafat Meeting 'Strategic Need'

TA0807173796 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 7 Jul 96 p 13

[Editorial: "The al-'Aqabah Meeting — a Strategic Need"]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat's meeting yesterday in al-'Aqabah with Jordan's King Husayn was not just an ordinary occasion for consultation or even coordination to confront recent developments in the peace process. As a matter of fact, this was an expression of a strategic need and of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian supreme interest, even if outwardly it appeared that the two sides had two viewpoints on recent developments, especially on the Netanyahu government's assumption of power in Israel and — as many observers believe — the negative consequences that this will have on the peace process.

The Likud has a known viewpoint on Jordan, even though — for tactical reasons — the Likud leaders have issued statements contrary to that. If some quarters believe that there is a convergence of interests between the two sides, then they are certainly mistaken. Numerous Jordanian officials have expressed this fact and noted that the only joint interest is between the Arab parties which together waged the battle of peace in order to regain Palestinian and Arab rights stipulated in the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The al-'Aqabah meeting derives special importance because it preceded Netanyahu's scheduled visit to Jordan. Consequently, the meeting established a specific Palestinian-Jordanian stance on issues related to following up the peace process, including for example, the Israeli prime minister's reservations about meeting President 'Arafat just because — according to the Israeli news media — his predecessor, Shim'on Peres, was accustomed to holding such meetings. The news media ignore the effect of the Palestinian-Israeli meetings on the summit level in invigorating and advancing the peace process.

In addition to formulating a Palestinian-Jordanian approach toward the future of the peace process, the important result of the al-'Aqabah meeting was to prove to Israel that betting on Arab differences and inflating them for hidden motives is no longer beneficial.

If Jordanian-Palestinian relations are stable and firm; if Jordanian-Syrian relations are improving continuously; and if Palestinian-Syrian relations are getting better; all this constitutes the right start for mobilizing all Arab and international potentials to restore the peace process to its just track, based on restoring alienable and legitimate Palestinian and Arab rights.

Algeria

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS0807110596 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 2 Jul 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe"; quotation marks as received; double parentheses denote source's use of brackets — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial:

Algeria in search of her freedom!

Praise be to Allah, The Fifth of July is the commemoration day of Algeria independence. The historical event which took place in 1962, was the consecration of the Algerian People sacrifice to brake the chains which the oppressors of yesterday wanted to tie them with.

In the front line of the confrontation were the Martyrs and the sincere Mujahedeen who have chosen to die standing up than to live on the knees. From their sacrifices everyone has gained, those who helped them, those who supported them, those who agreed with them, those who disagreed with them as well as some of those who opposed them.

The Algerian people have got used to the fact that at each commemoration of the independence day, an armada of exhibitionists from the dignitaries of the regime invade the media pretending they are the Mujahedeen who have save Algeria from the tyranny of the colonialism. Most of them are unknown to the History of Algeria while many of them have fought in the "other camp" against the same martyrs whose graves they are putting flowers now on. They have switch camps at a very late stage of the war as independence started to point in the horizon.

What about the Algerian people? In today's situation one can affirm that in reality there is not much to celebrate about. The freedom and dignity for the Algerian people do not seem to have come yet!

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when their country is still after five years under the "state of emergency"? A "state of affairs" where every crime is permitted and its perpetrators fully covered by an unwritten immunity in order not to "inhibit" the zeal of the defenders of the "Algerian State" against the "Algerian people"!

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when their streets are full of "invisible soldiers" that can strike any time, night or day, with the machiavilic objective of making them giving up their rights and just asking to be left alone out of exhaustion?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when they are forced under "the boots" of those who have established systematic torture as a means to dictate their will?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when ten of thousands of "Algeria's future" are in jails and prisons?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when they know that even in jail, their relatives are not save from a carnage if their jailers wished to perpetrate?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when their freedom of speech and expression have been confiscated?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when Algeria's institutions are transformed into oppressive tools directed at "domesticating" the Algerians?

What independence can the Algerian people celebrate when they are strongly forbidden the freedom of choosing their representatives?

These raisons for not celebrating are very similar to the raisons why the Algerian people have taken arms against the French colonialism!

The Algerian mountains, plains, villages and cities must have cried after the 05/07/62 to see the Algerian people who have chosen to live upright back to their knees again! Yet they must have smiled again when, after the savage oppression which followed the military coup, they saw waves after waves of the offsprings holding the "dignity torch" of their predecessors. Yes Algeria can celebrate in what she sees in her sons the sincere Mujahedeen. She probably sees in them the same spirit their predecessors, the free men, had in that land in the far past while she must rejoice to Allah Saying about them:

"Among the believers are men who have been true to what they have covenanted with Allah. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle) and some are still waiting; and they have not altered in the least" ((Koran Surat El Ahzab,33:23))

Assassination attempt against Imam Ahmed Sahnoun!

Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun, 89 years of age and imam of Al Arkam mosque in Bir Mourad Rais, Algiers was shot by apparently two people while he was leading the early morning prayer. Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun was wounded and his life seems to be out of danger despite a bullet which hit him in the head.

Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun is a very respected scholar and has been fighting for the Islamic cause in Algeria since early days of independence. He has been tortured many times by the military regime and has been under strict surveillance most of his active life with other "veterans" of the Islamic movement in Algeria such as Shaykh Al Ibrahimi, Soltani, Larbaoui...

More recently, Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun has established with other preeminent Islamic personalities such as the second pre-independence Algerian president Youcef Ben Khadda, a committee to seek the release of Dr Abbassi Madani and Shaykh Ali Belhadj the FIS leaders.

Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun has on many occasions denounced the military regime tyranny and aggression against the FIS and has warned the regime, well in advance, about "an explosion which consequences are known to Allah only". Shaykh Sahnoun, however has not made any public declaration since 1992. He was the president of "Ar-Rabitaat Adawa al Islamiya" since 1990.

Fingers are pointing to the "Neo-OAS" squads inside the military regime secret police which has not taken well the many voices amongst those who still believe in the regime seriousness of a "political dialogue" and who were offended by not seeing Shaykh Sahnoun and Youcef Benkhada in General Zeroual's "guest list" for political consultations. Others see that the authors of this criminal acts have mistakenly link Shaykh Sahnoun with the London rally for the liberation of Shaykh Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj of the 7th of July and this was some kind of a punishment.

May Allah make the recovery of the shaykh fast. Amine!

Official protest of the Military regime Ambassador!

Mr Benyamina, the military regime ambassador to London has apparently made an official protest to the British authorities concerning the rally for the liberation of the FIS leaders of the 7th of July. The military regime anger seems to be related to the fact that Dr Abbassi Madani and Shaykh Ali Belhadj are still leaving in the memory of the people despite the inhuman conditions of their isolation as well as of the ten of thousands prisoners of opinion which the military regime prisons are full of.

When are the military regime officials going to stop lying?

They are those who want the Algerian people and the international audience to believe that they are helping Algeria with their lies. Unfortunately when their public declarations are proven to be lies latter on, the damage is already done and they seem to be protected by some kind of immunity.

Since the coup d'Etat of January 1992, governing in Algeria has reached an ever low ethical standard and it is still "sinking". Everyone knows that even a prime minister can deliberately make false public declaration just for the propaganda of it and still get away with it after having been proven a liar publicly also, by other officials such as was the case of ex-prime minister Sifi last year.

Many officials working for the military regime with the rank as high as minister have been making public declarations about the "near-victory over Terrorism" since 1992. Their deliberately false projections varied from "victory in one or two weeks time" to that of "victory in few weeks" never longer. While this misleading declarations may have attracted few foreign loans that were hardly beneficial to the Algerian people if not detrimental to them when spent in reinforcing the oppressive apparatus, this has also added to the blindness of the military Generals who may have been caught in the propaganda of their own ministers and this is where these officials are participating in perpetuating the tragedy when they should be working for its ending.

Following the steps of those before him, the military regime chief propagandist Mr Mihoubi has declared that peace in Algeria is very near as the military regime is eradicating the "terrorism" which is foreign to the country. "Terrorism" for the like of Mr Mihoubi is the ongoing armed struggle. For them stepping over the popular verdict of December 1991, throwing the leaders, militants and sympathizers of the political party winner of the free elections in the torture centres, concentration camps, prisons and jails, should be met with clapping hands in sign of approval and any counter-violence reaction is terrorism according to their self-suitable definition. Mr Mihoubi is also trying to incite all the Arab countries to delegate to him "power of pressure" to use against some western countries which in Mr Mihoubi's views should have a tougher action against voices which do not agree with the military regime. The same "power of pressure" seems to be in use against some London based Arabic newspapers to close their doors to "different voices".

All the military regime officials false declarations have one objective, that of bringing more financial loans to the regime to pluge the country in more debt to be paid later on by the Algerian people.

Some observers are predicting that the military regime is going to pass to another stage in the same line of propaganda by putting itself as a candidate for the next African Union Organisation summit no mater the security cost of the show. This is taken as an investment which according to the regime logic will open up doors for more loans as the November 95 General Zeroual elections did.

Mr Ouyahia is after another debt rescheduling!

"Rumours" are circulating in Algeria about the military regime asking for another rescheduling of Algeria debt. The tactic chosen by the prime minister Ouyahia seems to be that of making it the public companies managers' idea to ask for it and not his. The scenario will be that after having made a deep diagnosis of the actual economical situation, these managers will unanimously conclude that only another rescheduling of the debt can save the situation. They may also promise that this is the last one. As the first rescheduling had no effect at all on the economy and was just another "bottle of oxygen" for the repression apparatus including its very well paid mercenaries who do not work for free, observers are not that optimistic about the use of any future rescheduling or for that mater any other loan and see it as a supplementary burden for the future of Algeria now that the military regime has become "a financial black hole" according to some experts.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak on 'Lightning Trip' to Turkey in 'Next Few Days'

NC0907105996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1040 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jul (MENA)—MENA has learned that President Husni Mubarak will make a lightning trip to Turkey within the next few days.

A communique on the visit is expected to be released in Cairo and Ankara tomorrow. President Mubarak will hold talks with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and ranking Turkish officials. The talks will deal with developments in the Middle East, regional and international issues, and bilateral relations.

During his recent visit to Egypt the Turkish president invited President Mubarak to visit Turkey.

Egypt: Al-Baz Urges U.S. To Reconsider Ties, Policy

NC0807143096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1230 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jul (MENA) — Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's office for political affairs, has called on the United States to reconsider U.S.-Arab relations and the foundations of U.S. policy. In a statement today on the sidelines of a seminar on the Arab-U.S. dialogue that began at the Arab League headquarters today, al-Baz noted that this seminar comes on the heels of the Arab summit conference, which charted an integrated concept of the Arab goals in the next stage. He stressed that the Arab summit received an international consensus. He pointed out that the seminar aims at understanding the thinking of the U.S. participants in order to achieve reciprocal and balanced influence so that not only the Americans will know a great deal about Arabs, but we also will learn as much as we can about them. He said that the Arab-U.S. dialogue that will continue for two days will deal with all common Arab-U.S. issues so as to reach a common understanding that will enhance the stands of both sides.

Egypt: Musa Praises OAU Statement Supporting Butrus-Ghali

NC0907064196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, the head of Egypt's delegation to the current OAU summit, has said the statement issued by the OAU summit yesterday supporting the nomination of Dr. Butrus-Ghali for a second term in office as secretary general of the United Nations reflects a wise African stance.

In a statement to MENA last night, Musa said that Africa's consideration of Butrus-Ghali as its candidate for a second term as chief of the United Nations is in line with the will of numerous countries that previously declared their support for him. Musa said contacts will take place to reach a calm and cordial agreement in line with all the international forces, headed by the United States, regarding the coming term for Dr. Butrus-Ghali.

Musa praised the African countries' consensus in supporting the special statement on Dr. Butrus-Ghali.

Senegalese President Abdou Diouf commented on the statement saying it is not directed at anyone in particular. The OAU believes in dialogue and discussions to solve problems.

The OAU summit issued the statement in support of Dr. Butrus-Ghali following a request from the Senegalese president. President Diouf made his request after receiving a phone call from President Mubarak in which he asked if the summit might issue a statement on Butrus-Ghali.

Egypt: Mubarak Meets With Ministers, U.S. Delegation

NC0907090596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak held an expanded meeting at the presidential headquarters this morning. The meeting was attended by the prime minister; Consultative Council president; deputy prime minister; minister of agriculture; the ministers of defense, information, justice, local administration, the interior, Consultative Council, and People's Assembly affairs; the head of the Presidential Office; the first deputy foreign minister; the director of the President's Office for Political Affairs; the chairman of the Arab Affairs Committee in the People's Assembly; and the chairman of the Arab Affairs Committee in the Consultative Council.

Also at the presidential headquarters this morning, President Mubarak received U.S. figures taking part in the Arab-U.S. dialogue seminar currently convening in the Arab League chaired by Henry Sigmund, the official responsible for foreign relations in the Middle East Council of the United States. The meeting was attended by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Egypt: AL-JUMHURIYAH Criticizes Statements by Netanyahu

NC0907093596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0550 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jul (MENA)—AL-JUMHURIYAH criticizes Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's statements to a U.S. television network. In the statements, Netanyahu reiterates that he rejects the idea of withdrawal from the Golan Heights, claiming that this constitutes a threat to the State of Israel.

In its editorial headlined "Netanyahu's Hardline Stances—How Long?," AL-JUMHURIYAH also criticizes the Israel prime minister's call to the U.S. Administration to pressure the Syrian Government to resume negotiations with Israel without conditions. The paper stresses that Netanyahu's statements show that he will never go back on his hardline positions.

In its editorial today the paper says the Israeli prime minister knows he is at the stage where he must express clear-cut stances and policies, not election slogans. He also knows that his current visit to Washington and its results are doubtless part of the test of intentions that will affect dealings with him and his government in future.

The paper stresses that the international community, which opted for peace and tried hard to expand its base, will not allow the peace march to be halted.

The paper adds that the Israeli prime minister can convey to the U.S. Government whatever he likes in terms of ideas and suggestions, but what counts for the world is the reaction of the United States as a principal partner in peace, one that has remained committed to the peace process principles and agreements thus far.

AL-JUMHURIYAH concludes it editorial by saying that peace is a comprehensive process that has its basis and objectives. The United States can face Netanyahu with these facts. The paper stresses that it is in Israel's interest to live in peace with its neighbors and that this will only be achieved through the full implementation of the land-for-peace principle.

Libya

Libya: Jibril—2 Months of 'Big Domestic Problems' Ahead Under 'Purge Law'

MM0907085396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Jul 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Five Killed in Clashes in Libya Between Police and Armed Fundamentalists"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — Libyan Interior Minister Muhammad al-Hijazi has declined to comment on reports of clashes between the Libyan police and fundamentalist oppositionists in Banghazi, which resulted in three fundamentalists, a policeman, and a civilian being killed.

Meanwhile, Fayiz Jibril, a Libyan oppositionist residing in Cairo and representative of the National Front for the Salvation [of Libya], has stressed that Libya will experience big domestic problems in the next two months due to Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's intention to implement what he terms the purge law, designed to get rid of the "veteran revolutionaries" who have displayed no loyalty to the regime.

Travelers arriving from Libya in the Egyptian al-Sallum border point yesterday confirmed to AFP that Banghazi, which is situated east of Tripoli, witnessed a confrontation the day before yesterday [7 July] between the police and fundamentalist oppositionists. [passage omitted]

Libya: Manhunt Under Way After Prisoners Break Out of Jail Near Tripoli

*NC0807112796 Paris AFP in English
0924 GMT 8 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, July 8 (AFP)—Libyan security forces have launched an intense manhunt after inmates, including political prisoners, broke out of a prison near Tripoli, a Libyan source here said Monday [8 July].

Security forces have imposed heavy checkpoints all along the Mediterranean coastal highway from Tripoli to the Tunisian border to prevent prisoners from escaping into the western mountainous Jabal al-Gharbi region, he said.

The source said the prisoners escaped "around five days ago" from the Bouslim prison, just outside of Tripoli, "which holds both normal criminal and imprisoned political opponents."

He could not say how many prisoners escaped, "but probably most were political prisoners since they make up most of the inmates at Bouslim."

Meanwhile, the eastern city of Banghazi has been under intense security measures since violence in late June which left a Muslim militant leader and two government officials dead, the source said.

Gunshots have been heard during the night, and during the day security forces with heavy weapons set up checkpoints "every two or three kilometers" within the city, he said, citing reports by Libyan travellers arriving in Cairo.

The Arab daily AL-HAYAH reported last Thursday that Muhammad al-Hami, a leader of the "Islamic Martyrs Movement" was killed in clashes between fundamentalists and police on June 30.

A colonel from security forces and a local government official were also killed, the paper said, adding that extra security from Syrte was called in to control the situation.

The region around Banghazi, 700 kilometers (420 miles) east of Tripoli, has seen several clashes between police and Muslim militants since the beginning of the year.

The biggest came in March when 26 people died in the Darna region in violence amid a police manhunt for several hundred opposition Islamists who had escaped from Al-Kuwafiyah prison outside Banghazi.

Tripoli said the clashes came in a security crackdown on drug dealers.

Morocco

Morocco: King Hassan on Constitutional Reform, Referendum

*LD0807232796 Rabat RTM Television Network
in Arabic 2111 GMT 8 Jul 96*

[Address by Moroccan King Hassan II on the eve of the commemoration of Youth Day at the Royal Palace of Skhirat — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Praise be to God; prayers and peace on our master, God's prophet, his family and companions. Dear people:

We are used to meeting every year on 9 July to commemorate Youth Day. [passage omitted]

Thus, fate decided that every year on 9 July our meeting precedes an important event in the history of our country. Workshops are set up and external political decisions are taken. There are divine opportunities granted by God Almighty as regards our national cause [the Western Sahara]. There are also wide-ranging and radical reforms and turning-points to take a new road, either in the political, economic, or social process. God Almighty wanted this year to be like all previous years.

This year, on 9 July, we are truly on the threshold of important events, as far as you are concerned, dear people. What are these events? No doubt you know that these events include the introduction of a constitutional amendment to our constitution. I do not have the intention today to talk in depth about the constitution or constitutional amendments. This will come when the time is right.

I would like to say that I wanted this constitution, before I tell you about it, to be one of the real reasons and one of the effective means to solve as many as possible of your problems, dear people, your economic and social problems. I personally believe that politically, thanks be to God, the cycle has been completed and that the round is over for the time being. But economically and socially, we have not yet reached the level we wanted to reach. We still need to introduce radical, original, and new changes and to breathe a new life into the remedies and means we have been using for so long in order to treat these economic and social problems. [passage omitted]

Thus, God willing this second chamber and this reform will be first and foremost an economic and social reform. Indeed, I am saying that politically the cycle has been completed for now, praise be to God. I am not saying that it has been completed once and for all. I am saying: It has been completed for now. Praise be to God, our political and trade union liberties and our public liberties, as regards publications, associations, meetings, political and trade union organizations, freedom of movement and freedom of entry and exit, all these gains, praise be to God, are now guaranteed and practised.

However, the aspect which still needs study on the ground is the suffering our people and our youth endure as a result of economic and social problems. Be sure, dear people, that we will not just approve a constitution and you will not just vote yes, God willing, for this constitution. But we will not remain idle until the date of the referendum on the constitution and the first, second and third elections. Not at all. We have been, for the past weeks if not months, studying and closely examining the creation of workshops and new job opportunities, particularly for the young people who passed their Baccalaureat exams and who have no job or work. [passage omitted]

Thus, you see that if the road is long ahead of us, it is full of actions that mobilize efforts, encourage the introduction of competition, and lead everyone to work hard and in earnest. There are so many peoples faced with this long road but an empty road. There is nothing worse than a long and empty road. [passage omitted]

I would like to say these last words to you dear people and to you dear youth since many young people are joining, every day, our forces which are standing fast on the borders of our beloved homeland, be they the royal armed forces, the gendarmerie, the police, or the auxiliary forces. Therefore we must also address them because they have chosen their path, the path of sacrifice and the path of steadiness and faith. Let me tell them this: Be sure that you are the apple of our eyes, and that we think of you day and night and we follow your situation. We are doing our best to improve your conditions. Believe and be certain, dear people, that whatever the circumstances and whatever the surrounding conditions, whether there is a referendum or not, if there is a referendum we would welcome it but if not we are in our [Western] Sahara, secure and peace-loving; but we will resist and fight if we are attacked. But first and foremost, [we are] secure and peace-loving but not defenseless. [passage omitted]

Sudan

Sudan: Al-Mahdi Sees Change in Regime's 'Tone'

MM0807135996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Kamal Hamid in Khartoum: "Al-Mahdi Tells AL-HAYAH: Opposition Rejects al-Bashir's Call To Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi has stressed that the Sudanese president's call to the oppositionists in exile to return has neither had any response nor been accepted because the government's policy has not changed. He reiterated his remarks about the need to call for a constitutional conference in order to solve the country's political and military problems. In an exclusive interview with AL-HAYAH, al-Mahdi admitted that there is some detente in Khartoum's relations with Cairo "and, for this detente to achieve its objectives, the Sudanese Government must openly declare that it is abandoning what it calls the Salvation [revolution's] constants and its policies which call for interference in other people's affairs and welcome those opposed to the governments of their own countries."

He described the recent tone adopted by the workers' union, asking the government to cancel the recent price increases, as the Salvation's friends moving over to the people's side. Al-Mahdi urged canceling the al-Bashir government's entire economic policy "which has proved a failure," said that he does not attach any importance to individual contacts urging him to achieve reconciliation and accord, and stressed his adherence to what he previously said were his conditions for reconciliation.

This came in AL-HAYAH's interview with the former Sudanese prime minister and leader of the Ummah Party yesterday at his home in Omdurman's al-Mulazimin district, in which he started by answering a question on whether he thought the oppositionists in exile would respond favorably to Sudanese President Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir who, in last Sunday's speech on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of his investiture, had asked them to return and help rebuild the country. Al-Mahdi answered:

"I do not expect a favorable response from those who are abroad, because the factors that caused them to leave the country are still there, and so that I may answer the question in full, I will first define who these Sudanese in exile are. There are five main groups: The military, dissident politicians, businessmen and bosses, professionals and artists, and a fifth group which left Sudan because they felt that there is a lack of personal freedom, that their homes were being broken into and their movements watched. This group would return only if it felt that there was respect for human rights. I appreciate that the present government is entitled to try to spread virtue and moral principles, but the methods that it uses contravene the principles of Islam which allows neither interfering in people's private affairs in their own homes, nor spying on them, nor introducing personal malice in these matters. With regard to the other groups, I know that they are not happy about being abroad and long to return home. With regard to the military, it is necessary to convene a constitutional conference which would lead to signing a just peace agreement. The same applies to the dissident politicians and the businessmen and bosses who transferred their fortunes abroad and who would only return if the conditions and climate for investment and for business improve, if the policy of random taxes is revoked, and if the interference and favoritism by the government's supporters ends. The professionals and artists who left will not return while the current labor laws are still in force and while there is this huge inflation which led to a 400 percent increase in salaries and also a 400 percent increase in prices. In addition, there are also those whose properties and homes were confiscated by virtue of unjust decrees and without trial."

Al-Mahdi commented on the Egyptian and Sudanese presidents' meeting and the ensuing announcement that relations between the two countries are witnessing detente and said: "Al-Bashir's government has two choices: Either it adheres to what it calls the Salvation's constants or it abandons them. These constants are represented in the government's policies which caused it to be isolated externally. These are policies which led to interference in other people's affairs, to welcoming those opposed to the governments of their own countries, and to the government's attempting to change the situation in some neighboring states and opening the borders to all those who declared war on their own countries' governments, through talk in Sudanese forums such as the Arab and Islamic People's Congress. For a while, the regime has been trying to improve its relations with Egypt and has been sending mediators. The detente may take one or two steps and then stops, unless the government changes its policy completely, relinquishes the Salvation's principles, and puts an end to the aggressive tone in its literature and songs, such as the ones we hear in the official organs ('We are fighting against the Americans and Husni the coward, and we shall make the call to prayer in the Vatican')."

Asked to comment on the steps announced to send the Islamic extremists back to their own countries and put an end to the media rhetoric which calls for waging war on others, al-Mahdi said:

"Indeed, there is what I believe is a sign that the regime has changed its tone, and is now addressing the world, the West, and Europe in a new, different tone, in addition to some measures which have been undertaken. However, its sincerity will remain in question, especially after the world lost confidence in much of what this regime has said, and these people will indeed try to ascertain how sincere this change is."

The Ummah Party leader and former prime minister described the comment by the president of the Sudanese Workers' Union, rejecting the recent price increases and threatening to use the strike weapon, as a "confession." He said that the current workers' union is a pro-government organization, since the government appointed it instead of the previous union which was elected by the workers' masses, and which was dissolved, while its members were displaced and tortured. The remarks by Taj-al-Sirr 'Abidun, the leader of the workers' union, are in line with the parties' and unions' memorandum delivered to the government on 6 June 1996. He felt that friends of the regime and those who defend its policies, have started to move over to the side of the people and of those who reject the regime because of the misguided economic policy which created this difficult situation whereby the government will establish 26 regional governments and 16 universities without any study or planning, and that is why it had to announce huge increases in the prices of fuel, bread, and more recently electricity, which has made life an unbearable hell.

Sadiq al Mahdi concluded his interview with AL-HAYAH by answering a question on whether contacts aimed at achieving reconciliation and accord will continue or stop and said: "Contacts with me will continue, but on an individual basis. I do not attach any importance to them because I know that the only way out for the country rests in the proposals I made in my last 'Id-al-Fitr speech. My proposals were clear, and I am working and waiting for a favorable response to enable our country to find a way out which would spare the country any bloodshed."

In his proposals to the government al-Mahdi urged that a constitutional conference be held, to be attended by all active political elements and aimed at solving the problem of war and peace in the south and of what he called political legitimacy, and [spoke of] the prospects for appointing a transitional government for a specific period, after which general elections would be held.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Foreign Minister Regrets Qatari Position on Border Dispute

JN0807160996 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1458 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 8 Jul (WAKH) — Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah expressed regret at the statements made by Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani, foreign minister of sisterly Qatar, prior to his visit to Bahrain last week. He said: We regret to say that these statements are intended to provoke Bahrain.

Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah was answering a question posed by WAKH about the statements made by the Qatari foreign minister prior to his visit to Bahrain, which observers said contradicted the declared objectives of the visit.

The Bahraini foreign minister said: We regret to say that the statements that were made by the Qatari side, of which we heard many, are intended to provoke the State of Bahrain. Qatar gives a one-sided view of the border dispute between the two countries, saying that the dispute centers on the Hawar islands. This is entirely untrue.

He noted: Qatar says that Bahrain fears for one reason or another going to the International Court of Justice. In fact, Qatar is the party that is taking a very big legal risk.

He added: It is easy to mislead public opinion on issues that are part of a comprehensive legal debate whose details are not available to the public. Moreover, Bahrain did not want to get engaged in media encounters in this regard, because such encounters do not serve the fraternal relations.

Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah said that Bahrain, which avoids useless provocations, has been disappointed by Qatar's insistence on following this course of making negative statements, giving Bahrain the impression that Qatar does not give any political significance to the policy of self-restraint being pursued by Bahrain. He added: Bahrain had wished that this policy would constitute a model for brotherly dealing between brothers. This makes us wonder whether our policy of self-restraint encourages Qatar to continue its practices.

The Bahraini foreign minister added that it is regrettable that such statements were made by the Qatari foreign minister hours before his arrival to meet with His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain. That action did not serve the expected objective of that visit, the foreign minister said.

He said that at a time when Qatar relentlessly insists on underlining its unilateral view on events, Bahrain would like to explain to the public opinion its point of view regarding this subject. Bahrain believes that its rights to sovereignty over the Hawar islands are old and inalienable. As a sovereign state, Bahrain does not accept that its rights be questioned. The Hawar islands are an indivisible part of the State of Bahrain.

The Bahraini foreign minister stressed that it is definite that Bahrain will raise its legitimate, historical claim to al-Zubarah, because al-Zubarah was completely united with Bahrain for over one and a half centuries. It is also a historical fact that Qatar invaded al-Zubarah in a bloody raid in 1937, and that the survivors of that attack are still alive in Bahrain.

The foreign minister said: The final historic fact is that Bahrain's complaint against that attack and its request to maintain its sovereignty on al-Zubarah was not subject to arbitration. This is because Bahrain has always preferred to resort to negotiations on this issue in order to safeguard fraternal relations.

The minister reiterated that Bahrain still prefers a negotiated solution or other formulas for a solution within a regional framework, such as accepting legal arbitration under the sponsorship of sisterly Saudi Arabia and under the umbrella of the brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council. The solution, he added, will be based on better understanding of the facts and aspirations in this region. This does not stem from fear of a purely legal solution, but because a regional solution will certainly be more harmonious with the situation in this region and the common aspirations of its states and peoples.

The Bahraini foreign minister concluded his statement by commenting on what the Qatari foreign minister noted in his statement regarding the reasons which prompted Bahrain last February to ask for the postponement of presenting the memorandums to the International Court of Justice, and his unjustified implications that Bahrain had hoped that something would have happened but that Bahrain's hope did not materialize. He said: We have no idea what he is talking about, because the request for the postponement was made by the legal advisers of the State of Bahrain for reasons related to their task.

Bahrain: Court Hands Down Jail Terms to 10 Defendants in 2 Cases

JN0907135796 (Internet) Al-Ayyam WWW in Arabic 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a session on Monday [8 July] morning, the State Security Court passed its verdict on a case involving the detonation of a locally-made explosive device underneath some oil pipes extending across a street in al-Rifa' al-Sharqi. Six people were charged with possession and use of explosives. The court convicted the six defendants and passed five-year jail sentences against two of them: Hasan 'Abd-al-Nabi Sarhan Ahmad Sarhan and Husayn 'Ali Salman 'Isa Miz'il. It passed three-year jail terms against three of them: Salah 'Abd-al-Muhsin Muhammad 'Abdallah, Sayyid Shakir Amin Salman Hashim al-Sakin, and Sayyid Zuhayr Amin Salman al-Sakin. The court decided not to look into the case of defendant 'Abdallah Nasir Al Tuq because of its connection to a previous case for which he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The State Security Court passed its verdict in a case involving the printing of illegal leaflets containing false news and rumors aimed at spreading chaos in the country. The court convicted four defendants in this case and passed three-year jail sentences against them. These defendants are: 'Isam 'Abbas Hubayl, Ja'far 'Ali Hasan Kazim, Yasin Muhammad Mansur Al Siwar, and 'Ali Hasan 'Abdallah al-Jadd. The defendants had agreed to print and distribute illegal leaflets. They set up an office and equipped it with printing and photocopying machines. They printed leaflets which contained false news, statements, and rumors.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Ban Imposed on Newspaper Reports on Apostate

MS0907120096 London THE TIMES in English 9 Jul 96 p 15

[Report by Eve-Ann Prentice: "Kuwait Ban on Times Reports"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait, which professes to guarantee press freedom in its constitution, has banned editions of THE TIMES that carry reports on the plight of Robert Hussein, the businessman in effect sentenced to death for converting from Islam to Christianity.

Mr Hussein fears for his life after an Islamic court denounced him as an apostate and Islamic lawyers ruled he should be killed. That move has caused outrage in the West, especially among families of many of the Christian soldiers who fought to free Kuwait from Iraq's clutches during the 1991 Gulf War.

The ban on THE TIMES came as news emerged that a Briton has been held in a Kuwaiti prison without being charged for more than three months. Ian Beaumont, 33, whose family comes from West Yorkshire, was arrested in April after being accused of fraud. He is being held in an overcrowded cell which has no bed.

His father, John Beaumont, who also lives in Kuwait, helped to fight the fires that threatened to ravage the emirate towards the end of the Gulf conflict and as a result feels especially bitter about his son's detention.

His mother, Mary, added: "My son has to lie on the floor. Because he cannot eat the local food, he has lost nearly two stone."

The Foreign Office confirmed that Mr Beaumont has not been charged and said "his initial detention was illegal" because certain paperwork had not been lodged in court. "We are looking for specific charges," it said.

Although the Kuwaiti constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and "the right to express opinion ... in writing or otherwise", lawyers in Britain say that Mr Hussein's life is in danger.

The British Embassy in Kuwait said all Western newspapers were subject to censorship, but banning distribution of entire editions was "unusual".

Qatar

Qatar: Chirac Arrives To Discuss Defense Contracts, Peace Process

LD0807163896 Paris Radio France International in French 1600 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the French Republic [Jacques Chirac] has arrived in Qatar to discuss defense contracts and developments in the peace process, an item which featured high on the agenda of the visit of the French president to Saudi Arabia yesterday.

Qatar: Foreign Minister on Ties With Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq

JN0807200896 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1540 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, 8 Jul (PETRA) — Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani has praised the existing bilateral relations between Qatar and the Hashmite Kingdom of Jordan.

In a statement to the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, he said that the two countries' wise policy under the leadership of His Majesty King Husayn and His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah has been positively reflected on relations between the two sisterly countries and their regional and international relations. This is thanks, he said, to the rationality of that policy and its consistent tendency toward giving pan-Arab interests precedence over other interests and resorting to logic and the language of constructive dialogue within realistic frameworks. [passage omitted]

The Qatari foreign minister described the statements made by Binyamin Netanyahu before he assumed office as disappointing and discouraging, and that he expected the Israeli prime minister would abide by the agreements that were concluded with all parties.

Shaykh Hamad warned of the consequences of failure to abide by the peace process and said: Qatar is currently studying the tendencies of the Israeli Government on this subject, and based on the results, the appropriate decisions will be made in coordination and consultation with various Arab countries, especially those concerned with the peace process. [passage omitted]

On the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] in resolving the existing problems between its member states, he said: Our problems in the Gulf region are just like other existing problems elsewhere in the world. There are border problems between many countries of the world, and there are similar problems between the Gulf states. This also applies to political, economic, and cultural problems.

However, he said, what distinguishes the Gulf states from other states is the existing harmony between them and the common nature of the Gulf community. He added: From this premise, we believe that any Gulf issue will be resolved if there are good intentions. We share the same destiny. It is the GCC destiny to endure and to resolve all our problems through peaceful means.

He said the most important problem in the Gulf region is the Qatari-Bahraini border dispute. He said: This problem is currently before the Hague Court of Justice, and the brothers in Bahrain approved this after approximately five years of talks. Nevertheless, if the mediation of big sister Saudi Arabia succeeds in finding a solution to our problem, this case can be withdrawn from the court after the two sides agree to this.

He emphasized that the case cannot be withdrawn from the Hague court before agreement is reached by the two sides. He said that seeking the ruling of the court is a safety valve to prevent the deterioration of the situation, God forbid.

He said Qatar is part of the international body and abides by the resolutions of international legitimacy, and the Hague Court of Justice is an international establishment.

The Qatari foreign minister said the border problem between Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar is over, and that the only thing left is to fix the border markers by the company that will carry out this project.

He said Saudi-Qatari relations at present are excellent, and that these relations have returned to what they were in the past thanks to the sincere intentions of the two fraternal countries. He said: We in Qatar also say that leadership in the Gulf region is for Saudi Arabia. On this basis, we as small countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council expect special treatment from the brothers in Saudi Arabia. I emphasize that the Qatari-Saudi relations are special and excellent.

The Qatari foreign minister denied the existence of a Qatari gas project with Israel. He said: We have a contract with a U.S. company under which the latter is entitled to market Qatari gas as it wishes. Accordingly, an agreement was reached between that company and both Jordan and Israel to set up a power station in al-'Aqabah to be supplied with Qatari gas. This is a vital project that materialized as a result of the positive impact of the peace process in the region. It will help link Jordan and Israel with the Gulf. The project is being implemented according to economically-examined steps. We will make a decision when the final agreement is signed late this year.

Regarding the suffering of the Iraqi people due to the blockade imposed against them, the Qatari foreign minister said: We in Qatar are extremely moved by what the Iraqi people are facing. Therefore, we always extend humanitarian assistance to the brothers in Iraq through the United Nations. We believe that this is our duty, because the blockade against Iraq harms us as an Arab nation, especially since Iraq is a basic and important buttress of the Arab system. Therefore, we cannot abandon Iraq in any way.

He asserted Qatar's absolute rejection of any policy that aims to partition Iraq, saying that such policy is not in the interest of the Arab and Islamic nations. He noted that Qatar always seeks to have the Iraqi brothers accept and implement the UN resolutions so that this blockade will be completely lifted. He expressed the hope that the causes of the current blockade against Iraq will be removed.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Chirac Comments on French Ties to Region

LD0807132696 Riyadh SPA in English
1219 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, July 8, SPA — French President Jacques Chirac said his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aimed at enhancing Saudi-French relations.

Addressing a press conference here yesterday, Chirac said he had reviewed at his meetings with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, deputy premier and commander of the National Guard, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy premier, defence and aviation minister and inspector general, Prince Naif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister, and GCC Secretary General Jamil Hujeilan, issues pertaining to his country's relations with the countries of the Arab gulf, Arab and Islamic regions.

Underscoring the importance of enhancing economic relations between the kingdom and France, Chirac said the kingdom constitutes the major source of oil for France and at the same time it constitutes an important market for the French exports.

'I do feel happy when I lay the foundation of partnership with the kingdom', he said.

On the other hand, Chirac highlighted the great attention being given by King Fahd to the peace process in the Middle East.

He noted that the kingdom has been extending a significant assistance to the Palestinian authority and Lebanon.

On his talks with Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Chirac said they were concentrated on the security affairs in the Middle East and the Arab gulf region.

He underlined the importance of developing military and economic cooperation between the kingdom and France.

Underscoring the importance of cultural cooperation between the kigndom and France, Chirac said 'France attaches a great importance to Paris-based Arab World Institute'.

The exhibition of 'The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Traditions and Modernization' hosted by the institute provides a good opportunity to the French people to get acquainted with the aspects of culture and development in the kingdom, he said.

Chirac lauded the existing cooperation between the Saudi and French archeologists.

Decrying the phenomenon of terrorism, Chirac said the summit conference recently held in Lyon had called for cooperation and coordination to confront this dangerous phenomenon.

He reiterated the keenness of France on the implementation of the Resolution 986 issued by the Security Council and said 'I have never noticed any reservation from the Saudi side as regards to the implementation of this resolution and I hope that matters will go ahead as it they are expected now'.

On the peace process in the Middle East, Chirac said 'It would be better to be patient until the stands and intentions of the Israeli Government are clear' and added 'the Arab world and Europe are keen on going ahead in the path of peace in line with the resolutions earlier taken in this regard'.

Chirac underlined the importance of the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from southern Lebanon in line with the Resolution 425 adopted by the Security Council.

Confirming the capability of France to positively contribute to realization of peace in the Middle East, Chirac said France is determined to adopt a strong and lively Arab policy.

Highlighting the development achievements accomplished in the kingdom, Chirac said 'Jeddah has become a beautiful and modern city' and added 'The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was able to make big development strides without neglecting its deep-rooted traditions'.

Saudi Arabia: Chirac's Visit Said Diplomatic, 'Not Trade' Visit

BR0807125796 Paris LES ECHOS in French 8 Jul 96 p 6

[Report by Stephane Dupont: "Jacques Chirac Proposes 'New and Dynamic Partnership' for Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah — The president's office stated loud and clear last week that Jacques Chirac's two-day visit to Saudi Arabia was "not a trade visit." There were therefore no surprises in Jeddah this weekend. Following his meetings with leading Saudi officials, the head of state did not announce any fabulous new defense deals or any precise program of economic cooperation. Placed from the outset under the banner of diplomacy, the president's stay was devoted for the most part to the Middle East peace process.

On this point, the talks between Chirac and King Fahd were notable for what French officials described as "unusual" cordiality and agreement of views. The French delegation, which included four ministers, was especially touched by the warmth of the welcome it was accorded. Saturday's [6 July] completely unscheduled appearance at the airport of a still very sick king (Fahd suffered a cerebral embolism in December 1995) was very much appreciated.

A New "Areb Policy"

For their part the Saudis were very pleased with the approach taken by the French head of state. The editorial section of the pro-government, English-language ARAB NEWS stressed on Saturday: "He understood that it is counterproductive for a foreign visitor to visit a country as a trade representative." The royal family has reacted very favorably to France's new "Arab policy" and in particular to the recent initiatives of Foreign Minister Herve de Charette in Lebanon. This attacking style of diplomacy was all the more appreciated in light of the Saudi leadership's irritation with the United States. Both sides were careful to mention the good relationship that existed between General de Gaulle and King Faysal whom he visited in 1967. Boosted by this climate of concord, Jacques Chirac suggested that France and Saudi Arabia should establish "a new and dynamic partnership." The two countries have already agreed that their foreign ministers will meet on a regular basis twice a year.

Purposely "political" in nature, the French president's visit did not however ignore economic problems altogether. Trade relations "can and must be strengthened," Jacques Chirac said, expressing the hope that French companies will invest more in Saudi Arabia. In a speech to the French community he said that French companies "must play a role in helping to expand the Saudi private industry and we will try to make it easier for them to step up their presence here."

Falling French Exports

In fact very few French firms have set up shop in the kingdom: around 60 at most, or 200 counting the representative offices. French industrial facilities, meanwhile, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. France accounts for less than 1 percent of all investment in the country. Franck Borotra, minister in charge of industry, post, and telecommunications, admits in an interview with LES ECHOS: "This is a highly unsatisfactory situation. Since the 1970s French companies have been neglecting the Arab world somewhat. That is a mistake."

In recent years, French exports have lost a lot of ground on the Saudi market, with civil sales falling from 10 billion French francs [Fr] in 1991 to Fr6.6 billion in 1995. One French businessman regretted: "They continue to talk in terms of major contracts and are still looking to pull off major deals. That approach is completely outmoded these days." Faced with serious financial difficulties, the Saudi authorities have had to make major spending cuts. They no longer have the means to undertake costly infrastructure projects. A diplomat remarked: "It is a very good idea to create joint ventures with private Saudi partners. The English and Americans saw that only too clearly." In any event, French official sources state that the talks between the two defense ministers were "fruitful."

Saudi Arabia: Millon—France Not 'Competing' With Others in Saudi Arabia

MM0907101996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 9 Jul 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Khalid Sa'd Zaghlul: "Charles Millon Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Are Not Visiting Saudi Arabia To Sign Contracts, Nor Are We Competing With Anyone in the Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah — French Defense Minister Charles Millon has stressed the strength of relations between Saudi Arabia and France. He denied that his country is competing with the United States or any other state in the region. Minister Millon told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that French President Jacques Chirac's visit to Saudi Arabia falls within the framework of the historic relations consolidated by the important meeting between King Faysal and General Charles de Gaulle several decades ago.

Millon, who accompanied President Chirac during his visit to Saudi Arabia, said that the visit is primarily political, focused mainly on consolidating the foundations of friendship and amity. he added that his visit is aimed at reinforcing political relations from several cultural, diplomatic, and economic angles.

On France's position on joint defense issues in the Middle East, he said that his country is pursuing a clear policy on defense questions under international policy in the Middle East. It has demonstrated this on several occasions through actions, not just statements. And it also honored the defense and cooperation agreements during the war to liberate Kuwait. He pointed out that 13,000 French soldiers participated in this war. France, he said, is bound to the region's states by numerous defense agreements, and it wishes to strengthen its cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

On France's interest in Saudi Arabia in particular he said that there is a special bond between the two countries and that cooperation assumed an important dimension after the historic meeting between King Faysal and General de Gaulle. He stressed France's strong desire to strengthen its ties with Saudi Arabia within a new framework beneficial to both sides. It wants to be the link between Europe and the Arab and Islamic worlds through Saudi Arabia.

On the peace process in the Middle East, he stressed that France's policy is based on the need to continue the peace process, and that Paris hopes that this process will develop and led to prosperity in the region. However, he said that prosperity can only be achieved through political and security stability. He added that the peace process must achieve its main aim, the aim agreed by all the parties. Because peace is in everyone's interests, including the European states. Everyone — whether in the region, including Israel, or in the European states — is banking on peace.

He went on to say: Everyone is working to find solutions and ways to lead us to the stages of implementing and applying the peace — practically, not theoretically — for the sake of guaranteeing the security and peace of the peoples in the region and in a manner that allows extensive, strong, and constructive cooperation that falls within the framework of respect for the peoples' human rights and the homelands' sovereignty and guarantees coexistence under security and stability.

Asked whether there are new Saudi-French contracts in the defense sphere, he said that President Chirac's visit is purely political and friendly. "We have not come here to sign contracts, but, rather, to continue the old agreements."

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Sends Letter to Clinton on Bilateral Relations

LD0907141796 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1330 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 9 Jul (SPA) — The custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Saud, has sent a letter to His Excellency U.S. President Clinton. The letter was delivered by His Royal Highness Prince Bandar Bin Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, ambassador to the United States, when he was received last night by President Clinton at the White House.

Following the meeting Prince Bandar Bin Sultan told SPA that the letter concerned bilateral relations between the two countries.

He added: "The letter also contained King Fahd's concerns in the interest of the Arab and Islamic nations."

Yemen

Yemen: Al-Bid Reaffirms Commitment to Separation

MM0807115096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
7 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Faysal Makram: "Al-Bid Stresses His Adherence to Separation on War Anniversary"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa, London, AL-HAYAH — 'Ali Salim al-Bid, former secretary general of the Yemeni Socialist Party and deputy chairman of the Presidential Council in Yemen two years ago, has stressed his adherence to the south's separation in a "political statement" issued by "a source close to President 'Ali Salim al-Bid," of which AL-HAYAH has received a copy in London.

The statement was issued on the second anniversary of the end of the civil war in Yemen, which marks the government forces' entry into Aden on 7 July 1994. The statement said: "As we mark this painful anniversary we determinedly stress our rejection of the reality imposed on our country through war and our adherence to the proclamation of the state of Democratic Yemen."

The state of "Democratic Yemen" was proclaimed in May 1994, a few days after the war broke out in Yemen. [passage omitted]

The statement issued by "a source close to" al-Bid, who has, according to unconfirmed reports, left the Sultanate of Oman for Switzerland for the first time in two years, said: "We would not on this occasion forget to call on the Arab brothers and world states to exert pressure on the Sanaa rulers to return to the negotiating table in order to come out with a political solution that determines the fate of the south through a free people's referendum under Arab and international supervision. While we renew our noncompliance with the agreements concluded with those rulers as regards the south, we warn of the decision to continue to impose the occupation on our people, because this will lead to nothing but further tension, war, and suffering, and consequently explosions." [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu—U.S. Talks To Bolster Security, Peace Process

TA0807150496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Preparations are under way in Washington ahead of Netanyahu's visit. While in the American capital, the prime minister will hold talks with President Bill Clinton and other administration officials. Netanyahu will also meet with Congress and Jewish leaders. Mr. Netanyahu will discuss among other things, the peace process and American aid to Israel. The prime minister told reporters about his security agenda when he goes to the United States:

[Begin Netanyahu recording] My security and defense agenda will be those aspects of our relationship that I think could bolster both Israel's security and concomitantly the peace process. I very much welcome and appreciate the traditional support that the United States has given Israel in this field, in the security field, and I think it will be a longstanding relationship. It may change its form and change its aspects, but one thing I don't want it to do is involve the United States' assuming in any way the burden of defending Israel. That is not in the cards. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Leaves for Washington Talks

TA0807163096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Binyamin Netanyahu has left for the United States for his first meeting with the U.S. President since becoming prime minister. During his visit to the United States, Mr. Netanyahu will hold a series of meetings with various people and address a joint session of Congress.

Israel: Netanyahu To Urge Clinton To Apply Sanctions Against Syria

TA0907075096 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 9 Jul 96 p 3

[Report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will urge President Clinton to apply sanctions on Syria, similar to those being applied against Iran, Iraq, and Libya, in order to pressure Damascus to stop Hizballah's activities, according to preparatory talks Israelis held with U.S. Administration officials.

This morning, Israel time, Netanyahu is due to land at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, and he will meet with President Clinton this evening.

Netanyahu will most likely tell Clinton that Israel is not prepared to continue being a victim of terrorism or continue negotiations as though there is no terrorism. "Hizballah constitutes Syria's military arm, which al-Asad is using as a bargaining chip in the negotiations," Netanyahu will say. Nevertheless, he will stress that he is prepared to leave the door open for further negotiations, and he will express his desire to meet with al-Asad as soon as possible. Netanyahu will say: "The Israeli position is that there is no withdrawal from the Golan Heights because our very presence there prevents war, but that is not a precondition, and we are prepared to hold negotiations with the Arabs presenting their positions." [passage omitted]

It should be noted that several hours prior to his departure, Netanyahu met with a delegation of Golan settler leaders. The representatives came out of the meeting with the impression that the prime minister would reject outright any demand for concessions on the Golan.

On the Palestinian issue, Netanyahu will say that Israel is prepared to ease the economic pressure on the Palestinian Authority [PA] on condition that 'Arafat shows that he has chosen the path of peace and not that of continued terrorism. On Hebron, Netanyahu will reiterate his readiness in principle for a withdrawal, but with caution, in order to prevent a blowup.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 9 July on pages A1 and A10, in a report by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar in Washington adds: "Syria views terrorism as a legitimate tool to implement its policy, according to an intelligence assessment presented to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on the eve of his departure for Washington. The document, prepared at Netanyahu's request, says that Syria is adopting that strategy out of weakness and because terrorism is directed against Israel and other states. The intelligence report details the terrorist infrastructure operating in Syria and the territories under its control in Lebanon. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of direct Syrian control of terrorist actions, but only an assessment of modus operandi. The document does not deal with Jordan's claims over recent months about terrorists infiltrating its territory from Syria. During his U.S. visit, Netanyahu plans to highlight Syria's involvement in terrorism, present the intelligence assessments to his American hosts, and call on the administration and Congress to put pressure on President al-Asad to cease supporting terrorist organizations. Netanyahu will tell President Clinton that any progress in the negotiations with Syria depends on a halt to terrorism."

[The report quotes "Western intelligence analysts" as saying that Syria was "the main casualty of the Israeli elections, and its feeling of isolation has deepened following Netanyahu's refusal to discuss a Golan withdrawal and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's decision not to visit Damascus during his visit to the region after the elections."

[On the Palestinian issue, Netanyahu will present President Clinton and Congress with a list of the PA's violations of the Oslo Accords in the war against terrorism. Netanyahu will call on the administration and Congress to tie any aid to the PA to them strictly upholding the accords, including the amendment of the Palestinian Covenant."]

Israel: Netanyahu Gives Address on New Infrastructure Ministry

TA0807161996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 3 Network in Hebrew 1305 GMT 8 Jul 96

[Address by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to the Knesset Plenum before departing for the United States — live; speech constantly interrupted by catcalls from the opposition benches]

[FBIS Translated Text] Honorable Speaker, distinguished Knesset. I thank Minister Hammer for helping me with the protocol. I have the honor according to Clause 37A of the Basic Law: The Government to inform the Knesset that I have appointed Knesset Member [MK] Yig'al Bibi a deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Office. As stipulated by the aforementioned clause in the Basic Law: The Government, this appointment takes effect immediately after the Knesset has been notified.

Knesset Members, today I would like to announce the establishment of the Ministry of National Infrastructures and the inclusion of MK Ari'el Sharon in the cabinet as minister of national infrastructures. Before doing so, I would like to briefly address yesterday's cabinet decision on the 1997 budget and the multiyear budget plan. Yesterday, the cabinet made a very important decision for the future of the economy. This follows several years of enormous deviations from the planned budgetary deficits, a tremendous increase in the balance of payments, and a huge rise in our national debt. We also saw the beginning of inflation, which not only reached double digits but also began to climb rapidly. Facing such a situation, the government was forced to make very tough decisions in order to prevent the economy from deteriorating. The economic plan we decided upon yesterday is a one-time thing; or, to put things more precisely, the steps we decided to take yesterday were one-time steps designed to restore economic stability. I compared the situation to a car that had veered off the road and must be put back on its rightful track. I know that the decision was difficult, but we are talking about a courageous decision that we had no recourse but to make in order to restore stability. I also believe that any decision of this kind must be accompanied by two things: first, the decision to do our very best to minimize any damage to the weaker strata. One must bear in mind that if the government had not adopted yesterday's decisions, the Israeli economy would continue to deteriorate and the weaker classes would be dealt a mortal blow. Those who pay the price of the burgeoning national debt and the rising inflation are first and foremost the weaker classes. The rich manage very well. They know how to take care of themselves.

Knesset Speaker, I would like to congratulate the opposition for beginning to function as one. This is very important. The role suits you very well. I did not hear any shouts when we learned that the poverty gap had grown to an unprecedented scope under the previous government's rule. But bless you anyway. I am sure that you will have the opportunity to congratulate us during our current term in office when you see how we reduce the poverty gap and lower the prices of various services for the weaker strata. Mark my words. Keep on shouting, but write down my remarks.

Knesset Speaker, we will shortly present the second installment of our economic plan, which will include supplementary proposals on expediting the liberalization and privatization of the economy. I am convinced that yesterday's decision, together with steps toward greater liberalization and privatization will lead to accelerated economic growth and a more appropriate distribution of national income.

Knesset Speaker, I am leaving on a visit to the United States today. In the wake of yesterday's cabinet decision, I intend to tell the U.S. President and my interlocutors in the American business community that there is a new Israeli Government with a new economic policy. Attracting new investors and investments to Israel is definitely among the two major goals I have set myself during my U.S. tour. I think that at its basis, Israel can become a leading country in the 21st century and even before that in the fields of technology, economy, and business. Judging from the initial reactions from the United States and from the rest of the world, I am convinced that this message is gradually being understood. I therefore plan to use this visit not only to build good relations of trust and cooperation between the U.S. Administration and the new Israeli Government but also to forge economic and business cooperation between the United States and the State of Israel. We will, of course, hold discussions with the U.S. Government on the continuation of our joint efforts to achieve peace. I think that everyone realizes that this government was elected in order to achieve peace with security and that we refuse to accept the deterioration of security as a natural, given situation. I believe that there is great understanding for our position among U.S. officials on this point as well. I am not telling anyone that our efforts to put Israel on a new, better track, from the economic, political, and security aspects, will be lined with roses or easy. However, I am convinced that we will be successful in our endeavors, during this term.

Knesset Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I want to make some preliminary remarks with regard to the National Infrastructures Ministry. One of the things that has always characterized the State of Israel is tremendous development activity along with a decentralization of authority. This did not always lead to harmonious results, and on numerous occasions both of these aspects have worked against each other. In the new ministry, we intend to facilitate coordination and a more efficient work process in building the infrastructures that Israel will require in the 21st century. I have the honor of informing the Knesset that in accordance with my authority as stipulated by Clause 39 A5 in Basic Law: The Government, I have decided to form a new ministry which will be called the Ministry of National Infrastructures. The person in charge of this office will bear the title of national infrastructures minister. The ministry's tasks will be to set up and develop Israel's national infrastructures, with the aim of preparing them to fulfill the nation's missions in the coming years. I have also decided, in accordance with Clause 39 A5 of Basic Law: The Government, to abolish the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure.

Knesset Speaker, I have the honor of informing the Knesset that in accordance with Clause 33E of Basic Law: The Government, I have decided to appoint MK Ari'el Sharon to the cabinet as minister of national infrastructures. In accordance with Clause 39 A4, I have decided to transfer the following powers from the other cabinet ministries to the Ministry of National Infrastructures:

A. From the Prime Minister's Office: the Israel Lands Administration; the Authority for the Development of the Galilee; the Authority for the Development of the Negev; the Ports and Railways Authority with regard to all issues pertaining to railroad tracks and trains, including suburban trains.

B. From the Energy and Infrastructure Ministry: all its spheres of responsibility.

C. From the Construction and Housing Ministry: the Public Works Department.

D. From the Agriculture Ministry and Rural Development Authority: the water economy, with the exclusion of water for agriculture and the water rates for agriculture, the Water Commission and the Lake Tiberias Authority. The distribution of authorities among the Agriculture Ministry, the Rural Development Authority, and the National Infrastructures Ministry will be defined by a committee established by me. The committee will submit its recommendations within seven days.

From the Interior Ministry: the development of sewage projects in the country; the National Sewage Administration; and the national sewage project.

From the Transportation Ministry: the planning and development of the Railways Authority and the land earmarked for railways.

From the Industry and Trade Ministry: mines and quarries; responsibility for handling the negotiations on the water arrangements with the neighboring states and the Palestinian Authority.

In accordance with Clause 54 A4 of Basic Law: The Government, I hereby inform the Knesset of this. I also have the honor of informing the Knesset of my intention to submit an amendment to the laws as mandated by the unification of powers under the new ministry. I also intend to submit an amendment to the Planning and Construction Law from 1965, according to which representatives from the National Infrastructures Ministry will become members of the planning authorities.

Knesset Speaker, distinguished Knesset, in accordance with my prerogative as stipulated by Clause 39 B of Basic Law: The Government, I seek the Knesset's approval for my decisions as following: A. to transfer to the national infrastructures minister all the powers accorded by law to the energy and infrastructure minister and all the legal obligations of the said post, including the powers and duties of other ministers transferred to him by the government.

B. Any appointment, authority, or power legally wielded by the energy and infrastructure minister on behalf of the government are hereby transferred to the minister of national infrastructures.

C. Any appointments on behalf of the government legally within the purview of the energy and infrastructure minister, which pertain to fields under the responsibility of the Energy and Infrastructure Ministry, will hereafter be the exclusive responsibility of the minister of national infrastructures.

Second, the powers devolving from the following laws will be transferred to the minister of national infrastructures. From the prime minister: the Israel Lands Administration Law from 1960; The Negev Development Authority law from 1991; the Galilee law from 1988; the Galilee Development Authority Law from 1993. From the Industry and Trade Ministry: the mining law. From the Transportation Ministry: the railways law, amended version from 1972. Part of the powers presently held by the ministers responsible for the three following laws will be transferred to the national infrastructures minister: the water law from 1959; the law for the supervision of water drilling from 1955; the ports and railways authority law from 1961. The possibility of transferring these authorities through legislation will be examined.

Knesset Speaker, I therefore ask for the Knesset's approval in order to permit the National Infrastructures Ministry to start operating with its new minister in charge.

One last word, as both you and the Knesset plenum are aware, I am about to leave for the United States. Therefore, I will only be able to present my request but regrettably will not be here to vote. However, I am certain that the Knesset plenum, including I hope members of the opposition, will support the establishment of this new ministry with Ari'el Sharon at its head as the new cabinet minister. Thank you very much.

Israel: Sharon Sworn In as Minister; Coalition Wins Confidence Vote

TA0807182396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ari'el Sharon has been appointed minister of national infrastructures. He was sworn in by the Knesset after the plenum approved the establishment of the Ministry of National Infrastructures and Sharon's appointment within the framework of a confidence vote. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that 55 Knesset members [MK's] from the coalition supported the government, 33 opposition MK's voted against it, and only Moledet MK Rehav'am Ze'evi abstained.

The government sought the Knesset's confidence after the Meretz faction demanded that the voting on the establishment of the new ministry be viewed as a motion of no confidence.

Israel: Likud MK Ben-Elisar Appointed Ambassador to Washington

TA0807150296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Knesset Member [MK] Eliyahu Ben-Elisar has been appointed Israel's next ambassador to Washington replacing Itamar Rabinovich. The decision was taken by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Levi.

Ben-Elisar's place in the Knesset will be taken by the next person on the Likud list, Re'uven Rivlin.

Israel: Netanyahu Promises To Accelerate Golan Development Plan

TA0807120396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu visited the Golan and held a meeting with settlement leaders, which the settlers later described as encouraging. Speaking with our correspondent after the meeting, Golan Regional Council head Yehuda Wollman said that he and his colleagues presented a development plan to the prime minister, and that Mr. Netanyahu promised that he would act to accelerate the implementation of the plan upon his return from Washington.

Israel: Netanyahu To Address Knesset; Labor To Submit No-Confidence

TA0807123796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister will appear before the Knesset at 1600 [1300 GMT] today to announce the establishment of the National Infrastructure Ministry, the abolition of the Energy Ministry, Ari'el Sharon's inclusion in the cabinet, and the transfer of several powers from various ministries to the new ministry. Qol Yisra'el will broadcast the proceedings live.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that after the prime minister's statement, the Knesset will hold a debate which will end in a vote. The prime minister will be absent from the voting, however, because he is slated to take off for the United States at 1800.

The Labor faction has meanwhile announced that it is also submitting a motion of no confidence in the government in the wake of the economic measures. Similar motions were earlier submitted by Meretz and HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality].

Israel: 4 No-Confidence Motions Filed Over Budget Cuts

TA0907084796 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 9 Jul 96 p 2

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Labor, Meretz and the Democratic Arab Party have filed no-confidence motions over the government's proposed budget cuts.

HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] filed a similar motion on Sunday [7 July].

"(Binyamin) Netanyahu's government has betrayed the trust placed in it by imposing cruel economic edicts," Meretz leader Yosi Sarid said.

The coalition faction heads issued a statement saying: "The coalition supported the government in its plan to cut the national budget as a vital necessity as a result of the fiscal deviations of the previous government. The coalition will hold meetings with the finance minister concerning the program's details and implementation."

Labor dedicated its faction meeting to the issue. "The government has declared war on the weak. These miserable decisions were taken in a panic and without first learning the subject." faction chairman Ra'anan Kohen said. [passage omitted]

Israel: Foreign Ministry Congratulates New Turkish Government

TA0907093196 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 9 Jul 96 p 23

[Report by Menahem Rahat]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night, Israel sent an official congratulatory message to the new Turkish Government headed by Islamic leader Necmettin Erbakan.

An official Foreign Ministry announcement said that "Israel followed the process of forming a government in Turkey with great interest, and it believes that no matter which government is in power, Turkey will continue to be a senior and important partner both in the building of peace and in the expansion of bilateral relations.

"The joint interests of the two states do not change with the changes of governments either in Israel or Turkey," the Foreign Ministry statement said. "The new Israeli Government foresees fruitful cooperation with all Turkish Governments and those who head them, and sends the government and the Turkish people its best wishes."

The message to the new Turkish Government is worded in very temperate terms with the aim of underlining Israel's expectation to continue normal relations.

In the past Erbakan said that after he is appointed prime minister he will repeal the military agreement with Israel signed during his predecessor's term. But the coalition agreement on which his government is based states that Turkey will honor international agreements signed by its predecessors.

Israel: Mordekhay—Security Zone, SLA Cooperation To Be Bolstered

TA0807124096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay said that until a peace agreement is reached with Lebanon, the security zone and cooperation with the SLA [South Lebanese Army] have to be bolstered. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the defense minister made the remarks when he met with General Antoine Lahd, the SLA commander, in Tel Aviv.

Minister Mordekhay praised the SLA soldiers' recent successes in clashes with terrorists and promised that Israel would not abandon the residents of south Lebanon. Gen. Lahd congratulated Yitzhaq Mordekhay on his appointment and called on him to strengthen the security zone.

Jordan Finds U.S. Request for Bases 'Extremely Difficult'

MM0807140496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 6-7 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "United States Requests Permanent Bases for Its Forces in Jordan To 'Ease Burden' on Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, Washington, London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI —Jordan is studying a request from Washington to set up permanent U.S. bases on its territory within the framework of a U.S. plan to redistribute its forces in the region in the wake of the blast which resulted in 19 U.S. soldiers being killed in Saudi Arabia recently.

The Jordanian Government is finding it extremely difficult to agree to this request, since it had on several occasions announced that it would not allow any permanent U.S. military presence on Jordanian territory, but new regional and international developments could force Jordan to agree to such a decision.

Official sources in Amman have told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that the U.S. Administration has asked Jordan, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates to shoulder a further share of the responsibility in order to ease the burden on Saudi Arabia after the blast and reduce the dangers still threatening the Marines there.

Jordanian opposition parties had strongly "warned" Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti against any intention of allowing any permanent presence for U.S. forces on Jordanian territory. The parties also condemned the joint military exercises conducted between Jordanian and U.S. forces on Jordanian territory, on land and in the air. [passage omitted]

Jordan: AL-MAJD on Improvement of Jordanian-Syrian Relations

JN0807125596 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 8 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The backache from which His Majesty King Husayn suffers forced him to rest in al-'Aqabah and has prevented him from visiting Damascus and meeting his brother Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to resume the political dialogue the two had started on the sidelines of the Cairo summit late last month.

In a telephone conversation with al-Asad last Monday [1 July], King Husayn expressed the wish to visit Damascus. The Syrian president welcomed the royal visit to complete the march of coordination and consultation. His majesty also managed to iron out a media problem that beclouded the atmosphere between Damascus and Jordan.

The problem was caused by a statement Jordanian Senate President Ahmad al-Lawzi made and which Jordanian papers published on Monday morning that Syrian Charge d'Affaires in Amman Wahib Jabr, during his meeting with the prime minister, had delivered to al-Kabariti a message from President al-Asad to His Majesty King Husayn.

The Syrian diplomat was taken aback by this report and felt embarrassed vis-a-vis his government as he has not been tasked to deliver such messages. He was forced to send a cable to the Syrian Foreign Ministry informing it that what was attributed to al-Lawzi is unfounded, and asking for permission to issue a press statement denying he delivered any messages from President al-Asad to King Husayn.

As Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' was on his way to Tehran to pursue his mediation between Tehran and Bahrain when the cable arrived, the Syrian Foreign Ministry took time before it replied. But, during that time, King Husayn contacted his brother Al-Asad and told him he wishes to visit Damascus. This made the issue of the message irrelevant. This also made observers not pay too much attention to Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti's talk to the Senate members about a disagreement with Syria.

Al-Kabariti had told the Senate members that he had an argument with the Syrian vice president on the sidelines of the Cairo Arab summit. He also told the summit participants that Syria had suggested at the Damascus tripartite summit which called for the Cairo summit to invite Iraq to the summit and voiced reservations over inviting Jordan. However, Egypt and Saudi Arabia thought otherwise in view of the many problems that an invitation to Iraq and Jordan's absence would cause on the Arab and international level at the present time.

Al-Kabariti told the senators that when Mubarak left the room where al-Asad and King Husayn were meeting, he told Mubarak he had hoped he would not leave them and would help them achieve reconciliation. Mubarak told him with a smile: Have no fear, they are old friends and dialogue between them will certainly produce the best of results.

Going back to the Jordanian-Syrian contacts, Al-MAJD learned that al-Kabariti summoned the Syrian charge d'Affaires on 27 June and asked him three questions regarding the political action mechanisms needed to promote Jordanian-Syrian relations and what Damascus believes Jordan can do to approximate viewpoints between Syria and Ankara. He urged him to fetch quick Syrian replies to these questions.

Al-Majd learned that the Syrian charge d'affaires returned to Amman two days later at the end of a brief visit to Damascus with the Syrian foreign ministry's replies to Al-Kabariti's questions but no letters from President al-Asad to his brother the king.

AL-MAJD can confirm from reliable sources that Jordan is determined to establish firm and advanced relations with Syria, even if this takes place at the expense of the relations with the Zionist entity.

Jordan: Security Agencies Reportedly Arrest Hamas Member

JN0807120296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 8 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of a crack down on members of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement in Jordan, security agencies last week arrested Dr. Musa al-Aqtash, a current professor at Yarmuk University and former lecturer at al-Najah University. Dr. al-Aqtash was deported to Marj al-Zuhur in 1992 on the charge of belonging to the Hamas Movement. AL-MAJD learned that Dr. al-Aqtash's arrest angered deputies of the Islamic Action Front, who plan to step up their opposition to al-Kabariti's government because of its negative attitude toward the issue of bread and freedoms.

The government released a number of Hamas members two weeks ago. The only one of them who remained in prison is 'Umar Abu-Sharkh. He is now joined by Dr. al-Aqtash, who was allowed to enter Jordan only a year and a half ago, despite the fact that he holds Jordanian nationality.

Syria: Radio Reports Netanyahu's Refusal To Withdraw From Golan

JN0807134596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Palestine—Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu reiterated his refusal to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan, claiming that such withdrawal will bring the threat of war closer.

In an interview with the U.S. CBS television network on the eve of his departure for Washington, Netanyahu also reiterated his rejection of the establishment of a Palestinian state, even if it is a demilitarized state.

Syria: Radio Reports Netanyahu Remarks Before Washington Visit

JN0907071096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will arrive in Washington this morning. This is his first visit after taking office. Before leaving for Washington, Netanyahu reasserted his intransigent positions on the peace process and his rejection of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. He said he will not change his attitude and will not go back on his promises to the Israeli voters, adding that his visit to Washington will not make him change his principles and major guidelines to please anyone, as he put it.

Asked about what is known as his three no's regarding his rejection of the establishment of a Palestinian state, his refusal to return the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and his rejection of withdrawal from occupied Jerusalem, Netanyahu provocatively said that he will put things differently: Yes to a unified Jerusalem, yes to ensuring peace on the Syrian front, and yes to coexistence and security between us and the Palestinians.

Replying to another question on whether he had made a decision to withdraw his forces from the city of Hebron in the West Bank, Netanyahu said no. He added that he is currently studying this issue.

At an Israeli Knesset session, Netanyahu said his talks with U.S. officials will focus on what he called the next stages of the peace process and the need to maintain what he termed security. He added that the U.S. Administration understands the question of security.

During his meeting with representatives of Israeli settlements in the occupied Golan, the Israeli prime minister expressed support for a plan to develop the Israeli settlements there. Following their meeting with Netanyahu, representatives of Israeli settlements in the occupied Golan told Israeli radio that the Israeli prime minister promised to pursue and expedite the implementation of this plan to develop Israeli settlements. Yehuda Wollman, a settlement leader, said it was a good meeting during which plans were discussed to develop the occupied Golan until the year 2000. He said Netanyahu's attitude was extremely positive.

Israeli radio reported that the heads of Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan asked Netanyahu to reaffirm his commitment to maintaining Israeli occupation of the Golan during his talks with U.S. Administration officials in Washington. The representatives of these settlements urged Netanyahu during their meeting with him yesterday to convey this position to U.S. President Bill Clinton.

In an interview with CBS on the eve of his departure for Washington, Netanyahu reiterated his refusal to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan, claiming that withdrawal will bring the threat of war closer.

Yesterday the Israeli Knesset approved the appointment of hard-line member of the Likud Party Ari'el Sharon as minister of infrastructure in the Netanyahu government. Sharon was sworn in before the Knesset. Earlier, Netanyahu officially announced the creation of an infrastructure ministry in his government to assign it to hardline Likud Party member Sharon. Netanyahu asked the Knesset to approve Sharon's membership in the government. Before leaving for Washington, Netanyahu delivered a statement to the Knesset in which he reviewed the changes he introduced to his government, including the cancellation of the Ministry of Energy and appointing Yigal Bibi, Knesset Mefdal member, as minister in his office.

It was also announced in Tel Aviv yesterday that Knesset member Eliyahu Ben-Elisar from the Likud Party will be Israel's new ambassador in Washington. Israeli radio said this announcement came after a meeting between Binyamin Netanyahu and Ben-Elisar. Itamar Rabinovich, the current Israeli ambassador in Washington, who is from the Labor Party, will finish his tour of duty in September, according to a recent agreement between him and Netanyahu.

Syria: Netanyahu Remarks Pose 'Grave Threats' to Peace Process

JN0807154696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1138 GMT 8 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The head of the extremist rightwing Israeli Government left no room for doubt that his government's policy is the same as the platform on which he ran in the Israeli elections.

The Israeli prime minister announced his refusal to withdraw from the Golan and other occupied Arab territories, his determination to continue the occupation and Judaization of Arab Jerusalem and to build settlements in the occupied Arab territories to entrench Israeli occupation.

The head of the extremist rightwing Israeli Government is now preparing to visit the United States. He paved the way for this visit by making statements and adopting positions which pose grave threats to the peace process, which has been in a critical state since the former Israeli Government froze it, or rather withdrew from it, a few months ago.

The strangest thing in the Israeli statements and positions is the announcement by the Israeli prime minister that he will take with him to the U.S. capital a file on what he claims as Syria's support for terrorism. This alleged terrorism was acknowledged in the April understanding and by the parties which participated in it, including the former Israeli Government, as being a legitimate right of the Lebanese people to resist Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory.

At any rate, the head of the rightwing Israeli Government will travel to the United States after clearly announcing his refusal to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories — withdrawal which was stipulated in the Security Council resolutions — and that he only accepts the resolutions that serve what he termed the security of Israel alone without considering the security of the Arab side.

In other words, the Israeli prime minister is totally canceling the very logic of peace which is based on the fact that peace will achieve security for all parties. He claimed that security will lead to peace while rejecting the Security Council resolutions, the land-for-peace principle, and the terms of reference of the Madrid conference. These were the basis of the peace process which the former Israeli Government joined and which was accepted by the Likud government under Yitzhaq Shamir, regardless of the fact that the former Israeli governments obstructed this process since it started approximately five years ago.

On the other hand, the Arabs and Syria assert that peace is Syria's strategic option. This was emphasized by President Hafiz al-Asad in his telephone conversation with French President Jacques Chirac on Friday [5 July]. President al-Asad asserted that Syria adheres to the peace process in accordance with its bases, which stem from the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. This is because this process is the only way to achieve security in the region.

This is Syria's position, which is known to the world and which enjoys the support of all Arabs, as was expressed at the recent Arab summit. This summit clearly announced to the world that it has appropriate political alternatives if the Israeli side jeopardizes the peace process.

Moreover, the world public opinion and its influential powers, reiterate almost daily their adherence to the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. This was emphasized a few days ago by the summit of the seven industrialized states, including the United States, along with Russia.

The EU states were very explicit and assertive when they announced in Florence a few days ago that Netanyahu's election as the new Israeli prime minister should not change the bases on which the Middle East peace process was established. The EU also called for commitment to the land-for-peace principle.

The Israeli prime minister's trip to the United States will not take place in isolation of these circumstances and facts. As the United States chose to play the role of a full partner in the peace process — which was accepted by all parties — we assume that the U.S. side can seriously support the achievement of a just peace in accordance with the land-for-peace principle and the resolutions of international legitimacy, which will secure the interests of all in the Middle East, and provide stability and security founded on clear bases.

Syria: Press Comments on Netanyahu's Visit, U.S. 'Responsibility'

JN0907081696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 9 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH comments on Israeli extremism, which is pushing the region toward tension and explosion. The paper says: Israel's current positions threaten to destroy the peace process and are creating tension and turmoil in the region. This should prompt the U.S. Administration to persuade Netanyahu to abandon his familiar no's and make him understand that security cannot be achieved in isolation from peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Peace cannot be established until all territories and rights are returned to their Arab owners. The Arabs are waiting to see how Washington will deal with the serious challenge posed by Netanyahu's policy and what it will do to save the peace process from this policy, which threatens to abort prospects for peace and turn the region backward by many years.

In its editorial, AL-BA'TH says the statements of the Israeli prime minister do not leave any doubt that he is determined to completely blow up the peace process. Netanyahu was not content with abandoning the objective foundations of the peace process—stipulated in the U.S. initiative, the Madrid land-for-peace formula, and Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425—so he added impossible and provocative conditions that attempt to market the Zionist peace-for-peace concept to settle the Middle East crisis. This means rejecting any withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. Therefore, Arabs should not expect any progress in the talks between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Netanyahu regarding the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

AL-BA'TH demands that the U.S. Administration play its declared role as a sponsor of the peace process by putting pressure on Israel to force it to abide by the peace process and resume the negotiations in accordance with the Madrid formula.

AL-BA'TH concludes that the United States is responsible, first and foremost, for making the peace process succeed. Any failure in this process will be U.S. failure and a strong blow to U.S. international credibility and its role.

TISHRIN addresses about the same issue. Under the headline "Netanyahu's Visit and the Required U.S. Role," the newspaper's editorial says: Through his policies that reject the foundations of international legitimacy and the Madrid terms of reference, Netanyahu is trying to force the Clinton administration to adopt these absurd political concepts, primarily security for peace and peace without ending occupation. These policies completely contradict the requirements for a just peace, the attitude of the international community, and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The newspaper adds: Through his current visit to Washington, Netanyahu attempts to cause further tension and estrangement between Syria and the United States by labeling Damascus as terrorist and urging Washington to adopt joint measures with Israel against Syria. The newspaper says Netanyahu's stands are very serious, not only because they are a flagrant challenge to the international community and its support for a just and comprehensive settlement in the region, but also because these stands destroy the entire peace process and create more hotbeds of tension and violence in the region.

TISHRIN says the Israeli Government's insistence on refusing to provide the requirements for a peaceful settlement underscores the fact that Israel is the sponsor of terrorism throughout the world. The newspaper demands that the whole world adopt specific measures to curb aggressive, racist policies.

The newspaper says the U.S. Administration bears a great responsibility for curbing Israel's terrorist forays, given the special relations between Washington and Tel Aviv.

TISHRIN concludes: The purpose of Netanyahu's visit to Washington is to destroy the U.S. role in the peace process, sabotage the peace process, and explode all hotbeds of tension and violence in the region. Washington is required to pour cold water on the hotheaded Israeli officials.

Syria: Paper—'Peace Should Unquestionably Precede Security'

JN0807170596 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 7 Jul 96 p 5

[Editorial by Riyad Zayn: "Peace Brings Security"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] While hardliner Israeli Premier Binyamin Netanyahu continued to reiterate flagrant refusal of Mideast peace principles as unequivocally termed in international legitimacy resolutions and to deny the Palestinians their widely-recognized rights to self-determination and statehood, the Israeli occupation forces are translating his reiteration into practice. Further confiscation of Arab land, building and expanding settlements, campaigns of arrests and oppression against the Palestinians and attacking Lebanon are at full swing.

New Israeli government officials keep making circumvention on the originally agreed peace principles, namely provisions of the US land-for-peace initiative upon which the Madrid conference was launched. Those officials raise doubts that the 1991 peace initiative cannot be a completion of the process and that the Madrid principles doubted.

Before leaving for Washington, Netanyahu made tough statements on ME peace, saying among other things that security should have priority over peace and that "peace for peace" is the substitute formula, adding that Israel has the right to counter what he called "terrorism" in South Lebanon.

However, statements of the extremist Likud chief are by all counts provocative and a pretext to flee the requirements of peace and to undermine the entire process. Alleged security issues have nothing to do with peace-making. Just and comprehensive peace based on implementation of legitimacy resolutions directly lead to security and lasting stability. Needless to say that occupation, aggression and oppression have proven to be the main source of tension and violence. Occupation and injustice breed resistance.

Peace obligations should not be by-passed under any pretext. Netanyahu's talk about peace without abiding by its essential constituents is misleading and is eventually intended to stab peace principles and to stall the process once and for all. His blatant call for abrogating Madrid principles is a perpetual occupation and arrogant hegemony and is, a s well, a challenge of the international community's will.

"Peace for peace" is categorically refused as it grossly violates peace requirements. Resisting occupiers and aggressors is a legitimate act of self-defence guaranteed by international conventions. Peace should unquestionably precede security. And only when Israel withdraws totally from the occupied Arab territories, peace will automatically be attainable.

Syria: Al-Asad Congratulates Turkey's Erbakan on Confidence Vote

JN0807205296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 8 Jul 96

["Text" of cable from President Hafiz al-Asad to Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan on winning a vote of confidence from the Turkish Parliament on 8 July — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the occasion of announcing the result of the Turkish Parliament's vote of confidence, it is my pleasure to extend to you my sincere congratulations on the victory you achieved. This victory affirms that the policies of your government are supported by the majority of the people's representatives. We look forward to joint action through which we will boost the relations of friendship and cooperation between our two countries, which are linked by the bonds of religion, neighborliness, and history. It is my belief that your government's winning of confidence will open new horizons for building these relations on the basis of mutual confidence and the common interests of our two countries in the interest of our people. This will provide the opportunity for settling any differences between our two countries through dialogue and mutual understanding.

I wish you success in shouldering the responsibilities of your post. I express to you my best wishes of good health and happiness. I also wish the friendly Turkish people further progress and prosperity.

Syria: Foreign Minister Receives Saudi Military College Delegation

JN0907081296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received a delegation from the Saudi Staff Command College, led by Staff Brigadier General 'Ali 'Abdallah al-'Usayri, yesterday evening. The meeting was attended by the Saudi Embassy counselor and the Saudi military attache in Damascus.

The foreign minister briefed the delegation on the principled stands of Syria's foreign policy. He also reviewed the situation in the region and the positive outcome of the Arab summit in Cairo. Discussions also addressed the future of the peace process and the close ties between the two fraternal countries, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and their importance for reuniting the Arabs and preserving Arab security.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Dostam Reportedly Willing To Participate in Government

LD0607190596 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement], has shown his willingness to take part in the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

According to a Radio Tehran report, General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam has shown his willingness to end his differences with the government and to take part in the government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. General Dostam has shown evidence to this effect.

The radio added that the government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has welcomed the decision of the Jonbesh-e Melli to join the government.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Chairs First Cabinet Session

LD0807143396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 0330 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first Cabinet session was convened yesterday afternoon. Esteemed Brother Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, chaired the session after taking over the post of prime minister.

The prime minister's press office told BAKHTAR news agency that at this session esteemed Brother Hekmatyar told the Cabinet about the country's current situation and the urgent needs of Kabul's citizens. He asked the new ministers to discharge, in the best possible manner, their Islamic duties for the prosperity of the Muslim and persecuted people and thus fulfill their national and religious duties toward the nation and society.

In one part of his talk, esteemed Brother Hekmatyar said: Savings in departmental expenses, preventing organizations from growing, [words indistinct], and raising the living standard of civil servants are issues that I am very much interested in.

The items on the agenda were discussed at the session and in order to save government budget money, a commission was set up to look at and to decide on the publication of unnecessary papers and magazines in ministries and departments.

Afghanistan: Pakistan Hails Hekmatyar Appointment, Seeks Good Relations

LD0607191396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman has said that by appointing Hekmatyar, amir of Hezb-e Eslami, as prime minister of Afghanistan, peace and security will be restored in this country. After the setting up of a strong government in this country, security will also prevail in the whole region and positively affect the restoration of peace. He said to a Pakistani newspaper that Pakistan has no objection whatsoever to the appointment of Hekmatyar as Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

In reply to another question he said: Pakistan wants to see the road left open to Central Asia and this country is ready to cooperate in this respect. He added: Pakistan's representative will take part in the oath-taking ceremony of the Afghan ministers. The Afghan Prime Minister had already issued an invitation in this respect.

The Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman said that no decision has yet been taken on whether to open a Pakistan embassy in Kabul. However, our consulate is open in Jalalabad. We will accelerate our contacts with the Afghan government in order to establish good relations between the two neighboring countries.

Afghanistan: Kabul Paper—Pakistan To Reopen Embassy in Kabul

LD0607190096 Tehran IRNA in English 1801 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, July 6, IRNA — Pakistani government plans to reopen its embassy in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, after 10 months of its close-down, daily "DRIZ" published in Kabul, wrote on Saturday. [6 July] According to the daily during this period of time, Islamabad government has retained its diplomatic staff in Kabul.

It shows that Pakistan's prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, wants to keep up with the pace of current developments taking shape in Afghanistan and definitely does not want to lag behind its neighbors, DRIZ commented.

The Pakistani embassy in Kabul was set ablaze by angry Kabuli demonstrators on September 6, which resulted in the death of one person and injury to a number of embassy's staff, after Herat was run over by Taleban forces. DRIZ further wrote that the government in Islamabad has shown greater interest in reopening its embassy in Afghanistan after Golboddin Hekmatyar accepted to join the government and to take the post of primiership.

Pakistani ambassador to Kabul, Qazi Homayun, is not interested in returning to his place of mission in Kabul and calls for appointment of another ambassador to Afghanistan's capital, the newspaper wrote.

Afghanistan's prime minister recently cabled a message to his Pakistani counterpart calling for the reopening of the embassy in Kabul and expansion of mutual relations. Benazir Bhutto in a message of congratulation on the occasion of the appointment of Golboddin Hekmatyar to the post of prime minister in Afghanistan described the current developments in that country as an important step in bringing peace to the war-torn Afghanistan and the improvement of relations between the two neighboring countries.

Afghanistan: Pakistani Minister Holds Talks With Taleban in Kandahar

LD0807163996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nasrullah [Khan] Babar, the interior minister of Pakistan, is visiting Kandahar to meet with the Taleban group. A reliable source in Quetta [capital of Pakistan's Baluchistan Province] reported to Radio Message of Freedom that Nasrullah Babar secretly arrived in Kandahar yesterday after his recent visit to Quetta. There he will hold talks with the totalitarian [totalitar] Taleban group.

The source added that Babar is one of the strongest and most influential supporters of the Taleban group. Babar regards the creation of the Taleban group as one of his major achievements after the restoration of security in Karachi city. Babar will brief the Taleban group about the recent developments in Afghanistan and the challenge the Taleban group now faces. It is not yet clear when Babar will return to Pakistan.

Afghanistan: Government Envoy in Washington Comments on Meeting

LD0607180796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A government delegation attended a Washington conference in the interests of the Islamic system and to present the government's position on various issues.

In an interview with the correspondent of MOJAHED gazette, esteemed engineer Mohammad Eshaq, a member of the Afghan delegation at the Washington conference, has made the above point.

He said: The conference provided the opportunity to seriously raise once again the issue of foreign intervention in Afghanistan. The government delegation criticized foreign countries for interfering in Afghan affairs, and criticized America for remaining indifferent toward foreign intervention in Afghanistan. [words indistinct]

In his interview, engineer Mohammad Eshaq spoke about the efforts of the participants to the conference to find an acceptable approach to resolving the problem, as well as the government's principled proposals. He said that the government's principled position attracted the attention of the audience.

The Taleban representatives did not take part in the conference. They held separate discussions and meetings with the Americans. [words indistinct].

Engineers Mohammad Eshaq said that the purpose of this conference was to gather information about Afghanistan. In the light of this information, the Americans want to formulate their government policy.

Afghanistan: Cabinet Rules To Evacuate Illegally Occupied Buildings

LD0807183696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A session of the council of ministers, chaired by Brother Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, was held this afternoon. The prime minister's press office reported to BAKHTAR that at this session Brother Hekmatyar spoke first about the country's political and military situation. The issue of water and electricity supplies to Kabul citizens was then discussed. On this issue, Esteemed Engineer Mohammad Ayub, minister of water and electric power, and Esteemed Engineer Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, former minister of city planning and housing, gave necessary explanations.

The session also discussed the evacuation of residences and private and government land being occupied by individuals and government institutions. The session rendered the following decision:

All residential houses and land belonging to individual persons or government enterprises being illegally occupied by individuals or government departments must be evacuated as soon as possible and returned to their lawful owners. The ministry of internal affairs was instructed to follow up the issue and to take concrete action.

Regarding the right to search houses, to seize suspected persons, or to arrest individuals, [it was decided] that no department has the right to search houses, to seize individuals, or to pursue people without a court order.

Those who are arrested by individuals, groups or government departments must be immediately handed over to [word indistinct].

Transgressors will be prosecuted.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: India Urged To Remove Restrictions To Narrow Trade Gap

BK0707164196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bangladesh has urged India to remove all tariff and non-tariff barriers on all its exportable items to narrow the trade gap. The call was made by Commerce and Industry Minister Tofail Ahmed during his meeting with Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider in Dhaka today. Ahmed referred to the last March intergovernmental group meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on trade liberalization in Colombo under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement.

The Indian foreign secretary met Finance Minister S.A.M.S. Kibria. They discussed economic and trade ties between the two countries. Both sides expressed the hope that the friendly relations between Bangladesh and India would further strengthen in the future through mutual cooperation and understanding.

The Indian foreign secretary also met the Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak. During the meeting, they exchanged views on the problems and development of water resources of Bangladesh. Razzak told the Indian foreign secretary that the Ganges river water problem is a crucial one for Bangladesh. He hoped that talks to seek a permanent solution to the Ganges water would begin as soon as possible. The Indian foreign secretary appreciated the acute water problem in Bangladesh and assured of his government's readiness to work for an immediate solution to the problem.

India

India: Muslim 'Militants' Release 19 Hostages in Kashmir

BK0807150596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1455 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, July 8 (AFP) - Muslim militants late Monday [8 July] released all 19 journalists held hostage for almost eight hours, the head of the Jammu and Kashmir Ikhwan group said.

"All of them have been released and they will be reaching Srinagar in an hour," Hilal Hyder, chief commander of the Jammu and Kashmir Ikhwan group, which took the journalists hostage, told AFP. "It (the release) is unconditional."

India: 'Militants' Hold Hostages Over 'Grievances' With Local Media

BK0807120896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1146 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, July 8 (AFP) — Talks were continuing late Monday [8 July] with a Moslem militant group which took 19 journalists hostage demanding that editors of all newspapers in the summer capital meet group leaders by evening.

The journalists, including AFP correspondent Surinder Oberoi and photographer Tauseef Mustafa, were waylaid by the Jammu Kashmir Ikhwan group at Anantnag town, 55 kilometers (34 miles) south of here.

"We are being treated well by the militants," Oberoi said by telephone "The militants have no grievances about foreign correspondents but only with local media."

Oberoi said the militant group wanted to hold talks with all the newspaper editors of Srinagar and had set a deadline of 4.00 p.m. (1030 GMT) Monday.

A spokesman for the Kashmiri Editors' Union said negotiations were continuing, adding no threats had been made by the militants.

"For the moment they are all safe," said spokesman Manzoor Anjum, the editor of the Uqab (Falcon) newspaper, one of whose journalists is among the hostages.

The incident began when the journalists were invited to a press conference early Monday by another militant group, the Muslim Mujahideen, at a place called Achabal, near Anantnag town.

The 19 journalists, including Reuters' correspondent Seikh Mustaq and photographer Fayaz Kablil, AP Television's Mehrajuddin and Bilal Bhat of Asian News International, all based in Srinagar, set out together by car.

"They were supposed to reach Achabal by 12.30 p.m but by 12:00 p.m they were kidnapped," Anjum said. After talking by telephone to his journalist, he also said that the Jammu Kashmir Ikhwan stopped the cars at Anantnag town at gunpoint.

Anjum said the Indian government had a duty to protect journalists.

"Our safety lies entirely with the government and it is the duty of the government to provide security for the journalists," he said.

The Ikhwan last week ordered Srinagar-based newspapers to cease publication. The ban was ignored but it was not clear if this prompted the hostage-taking.

Yassen Malik, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front blamed the abduction on Indian security forces saying it was an attempt to curb the freedom of the press.

"This is the work of Indian (security) agencies to curb the functioning of press in Kashmir," Malik said. "We appeal to the international community to take note of this."

Six journalists have been killed in Kashmir since 1989 when the separatists stepped up their anti-India rebellion. Correspondents and photographers based here said that they are finding the going extremely tough and risky.

Mustaq Ali, a photographer with AFP was killed and two other journalists injured on September 7, 1995, when a powerful parcel bomb went off after it was hand delivered to the local office of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

English and Urdu language newspapers have been voluntarily closing their publications following threats by various militant groups including the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon and Jammu Kashmir Ikhwan.

In July last year Kashmir newspapers stopped printing for three weeks after the dominant Hizbul Mujahideen guerrilla group ordered them not to publish statements by a renegade militant, Kukka Parrey.

Parrey struck back in August by abducting two journalists to his stronghold of Hajin, some 40 kilometers (35 miles) from here and freed them after newspapers published his statements and agreed to do so in future.

On December 7 a journalists from the Free News International, Zafar Mehraj, was shot and wounded by unidentified gunmen when he was returning from meeting Kukka Parrey.

India: Delhi Court Summons Rao in Cheating Case

BK0907093996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 9 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Delhi court today issued summons to the former prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, making him a co-accused in the one lakh dollar cheating case against Chandraswamy [godman] by an NRI [Nonresident Indian] Mr. Lakhubhai Patahk. The chief metropolitan magistrate, Mr. Prem Kumar, who issued the summons directed Mr. Rao to appear in his court on the 24th of this month. The summons has been issued on an application of a Delhi lawyer, Shyamsundar Sharma, whose counsel, O.P. Saxsena, had yesterday forcefully argued the need for summoning Mr. Rao in the wake of the ongoing testimony of Nonresident Indian Lakhubhai Patahk.

India: Gowda Speaks on Hike in Petroleum Price, Kashmir Election

BK0507162696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union council of ministers has been expanded. Mr. R.L. Jalappa, who was minister of state with independent charge of the Textile Ministry, has been elevated to cabinet rank. Four new ministers of state have also been inducted. They are: Mr. Raghubans Prasad Singh of the Janata Dal, Mr. Satpal Maharaj of Congress-Tiwari, Mr. N.V.N. Somu and Mr. T.R. Balu — both of DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]. The president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers at Rashtrapati Bhavan [president house] this evening. With this expansion, the strength of the council of ministers has gone up to 39. The minister of state for communications, Mr. Beni Prasad Verma, who was to be elevated to cabinet rank could not attend the swearing-in ceremony.

Talking to newsmen after the expansion, the prime minister, Mr. Deve Gowda, said he is aware of the reaction to the hike in the price of petroleum products. He was, however, noncommittal when asked whether the price hike will be reviewed. Mr. Gowda pointed out that despite the hike, the government will be continuing to subsidize petroleum products to the tune of 8,000 crore rupees. Referring to his visit to Jammu tomorrow, Mr. Gowda said he is going there to assess the extent of damage caused by floods in the region. He said if any political party wants to meet him during the visit, he would be open for talks. The prime minister said an all-party meeting to discuss the timing of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held on Monday. [8 July]

India: Congress Demands Further Reduction in Petroleum Prices

BK0807164896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress Party has demanded further reduction in the prices of diesel and also reduction in the prices of petrol and LPG [Liquefied Petroleum Gas]. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newspersons that the government can think of other measures to reduce the gap without increasing the cost of these items.

Several members of parliament have also urged the prime minister to review the government's decision of hiking prices of petroleum products. In a letter to Mr. Deve Gowda, they requested him to reduce the prices of diesel by another 5 percent and 10 percent on petrol and 15 percent on LPG.

In Andhra Pradesh, several Congress leaders, including the president of the state unit of the party and workers, were taken into custody for protesting against the rise in prices of petroleum products. They organized a rasta roko [block road] stir in the state today.

The Delhi High Court today dismissed a petition challenging the hike in petroleum prices. The division bench observed that hiking of petroleum prices by the government is a decision taken by the Cabinet and there is no reason to interfere in it.

The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to increase the bus fare by 15 percent from midnight tonight.

India: Nuclear-Powered Submarine Developed for Navy

BK0807134796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has successfully developed a nuclear-powered detect submarine for the Navy. The submarine named Advanced Technology Vehicle was tested successfully somewhere in the East coast recently. With this, India becomes the sixth country in the world after the United States, Britain, Russia, and China to possess this most sought after technology.

India: Air Force Makes MiG-21 Aircraft More Effective

BK0607120796 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian Air Force [IAF] has made the obsolescent MiG-21bis aircraft more effective with skillful management of human resources and minor innovations. Our correspondent Rudranath Sanyal, who visited a forward air base in the Thar desert, reports that the MiG-21bis aircraft will continue to be the backbone of the IAF fleet till such time as the proposed MiG upgradation program is completed.

[Begin Sanyal recording] The formula that a lesser aircraft can do wonders in the hands of a wonderful pilot still holds good. This is especially true in the case of MiG-21bis fighter bombers flown by Indian Air Force pilots over the Thar desert near the country's western frontiers. With their extraordinary skill to maneuver the machine and willingness to take calculated risks, these pilots make up for the limitations of the less modern aircraft to a great measure. [Words indistinct] with back up from the IAF ground staff who man long-range radars and various air defense weapons system like the surface-to-air missiles. With low-cost upgradation and minor but useful innovation by Indian engineers over the years, much of the small and big equipment used by the ground staff are among the best in the world. According to IAF sources all the forward bases are being provided with high-tech gadgets to the extent possible within the limits of the budget. The Canadian (?Hover) robots, for instance, are a big relief for all Air Force personnel. Fitted with cameras, it is a remote-controlled vehicle that can effortlessly defuse bombs and explosives that can be dropped or planted by the enemy in the forward bases. While high-tech hardware like the remote-controlled bomb disposal vehicles are being acquired, the older machines have not been forgotten. The Indian Air Force is making full use of the MiG-21bis aircraft for its ability to withstand the heat and dust of the deserts. This is Rudranath Sanyal reporting for Doordarshan News from near the Pakistan border in the desert sector. [end recording]

Iran

Iran: Turkish Minister—Army Undertakes Inquiry Into Chopper Raid

LD0807195196 Tehran IRNA in English 1939 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 8, IRNA — Deputy Interior Minister of Turkey Erol Chaker who arrived here Monday [8 July] evening for the third assembly of Iran-Turkey security commission said here today that the Turkish Army was leading a query into an attack by Turkish choppers against an Iranian border area earlier this month.

He also admitted that Turkish military aircraft had once, by mistake, bombed an Iranian borderline in 1993, but observed that the Turkish government was willing and ready to make every sort of compensation to Iran. The Turkish official said his country and Iran had relations for about three centuries, and commented that the two neighboring countries never had any discrepancy.

He also made it clear that Turkey did not harbor any single Iranian dissident group on the Turkish soil.

Afghanistan: Daily Sees 'Chances of Peace' in Afghanistan

NC0607175596 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 26 Apr 96 p 12

[Commentary by M. Mollazehi: "The Outlook for Peace in Afghanistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the entry of more than 6,000 armed forces personnel and political cadres of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] into Kabul and the delegation of the post of prime minister to Golboddin Hekmatyar, it appears that Afghanistan is on a new and different path of political and military developments.

The agreement between the Hezb-e Eslami and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society] for the distribution of power which was signed in Khordad [22 May-21 June] came after prolonged and intensive negotiations. According to this agreement, the position of prime minister along with some other ministries was to be allocated to the Hezb-e Eslami and the two sides agreed that a new government with a new composition would be established.

The aim of the leaders of these two parties — who had hitherto been locked in fierce armed strife in pursuit of power — is to establish peace in Afghanistan and create conditions conducive to the holding of elections in order to completely halt the internecine power struggle. How to attain this objective is a subject that will continue to be controversial.

Thus, the new developments that have emerged in Afghanistan are of immense significance in view of the nature of the Afghan groups and the ethnic composition of the new government and will probably replace the power struggle with peace in Afghanistan in the long term. The fact that the Hezb-e Eslami considers itself the representative of the Pashtun nationality group and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami is comprised of the Tajik and Farsi-speaking groups will not be sufficient to ensure that the future of Afghanistan will be any different from its past.

Prior to the agreement among Golboddin Hekmatyar, Borhanoddin Rabbani, and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, Afghanistan was in danger of dismemberment, and in fact the country was divided up in practice. Four or five districts separated on the basis of their ethnic and geographical structures. The Kabul government had room to maneuver only in a specific area. The Hezb-e Eslami held power in the southern part of the country; six percent of the country had been taken over by the Taleban group, and the north was in control of the Jonbesh-e Melli-ye Eslami [National Islamic Movement] led by General Dostam. The Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] held sway over the Hazarajat region and central Afghanistan, thus completing the practical division.

With the entry of Hekmatyar into Kabul and his assumption of the post of prime minister, an important part of the country has regained its national and territorial unity. This is the most important gain from the accord between the Hezb-e Eslami and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami. It can be envisioned that with the passage of time the Kabul government will be able to ensure national and territorial unity through political and military means.

The first step on this path will be to encourage the smaller groups to enter into negotiations and accept a reasonable role in the Kabul government. In the draft of the accord signed between the Hezb-e Eslami and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami this issue is prominently emphasized. One of the responsibilities of the new government comprised of these two parties will be to create the necessary conditions for talks with all the groups and to encourage political participation.

Ostensibly, the government is optimistic that with the passage of time, more favorable conditions will be created and all the groups will cease their strife and thus the Kabul government will become stable. Of course, the acceptance of such a policy by all the current groups seeking power in Afghanistan will not be so simple.

In this regard, the Taleban group's position is of utmost importance. This is because this group considers itself the representative of the Pashtun nationality in the country; and this in itself is a source of conflict with Hekmatyar on the issue of the representation of the Pashtuns. Accordingly it will be no surprise if the Taleban group finds itself in a more difficult and vulnerable position with the entry of Hekmatyar into Kabul.

This is because the Pashtun tribe sees its ethnic interest lying in supporting the Kabul government — a role that has been delegated to Hekmatyar. Naturally this means the Taleban's social base will be considerably undermined. In any case, one should bear in mind that combining the military forces of the Hezb-e Eslami and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami will greatly enhance the government's military power and will place the Afghanistan Armed Forces in a position to attack those groups that insist on a military solution and reject a political one.

Hence, it will be understandable if some armed groups that do not abandon their military operations and have transformed Afghanistan into a factionally and ethnically divided country are confronted by Afghanistan's strengthened armed forces. The general consensus is that the new government of Afghanistan will initially embark on political negotiations in order to restore national and territorial unity to that country. However, if a group is not prepared to accept a political solution and agree to participate, then Afghanistan will have plausible reasons for using military force.

In any case, one should note that with the arrival of Hekmatyar and the Hezb-e Eslami in Kabul, the regional and international position of the Kabul government will be consolidated. Russia's desire to reopen its embassy in Kabul bears testimony to the veracity of this statement. There is no doubt that the United States and its regional allies will step up their efforts to undermine the peace process in Afghanistan. However it does not appear likely that they will succeed. The U.S. Senate's proposal to convene a meeting of the Afghan group leaders in Washington has been rejected by nearly all the Afghan leaders, confirming the aforementioned premise.

However, in the aftermath of the accord of the Hezb-e Eslami and the Jam'iyat-e Eslami, the prospects for Afghanistan are much different than in the past. Now the chances for peace are greater and the danger of the dismemberment of Afghanistan has decreased even though it has not been eliminated entirely. Even so, this does not mean the end to internal factional rivalry and vying for influence in the country on the regional and international levels.

Iran: Daily Directs Yeltsin Toward Third World Bloc Against U.S.

LD0807151296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 6 Jul 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Yeltsin: Keep Distance From the US, Third World is Natural Ally"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The re-election of Boris Yeltsin as Russia's president, with more than 53 percent of the votes, indicates that he is popular; but the fact that 40 percent voted for his Communist rival, Gennadiy Zyuganov, shows that almost half of Russia's electorate is not satisfied with the current state of Russia.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran and Russia have enjoyed expanding relations. Close relations between Iran and Russia stem from the fact that both countries play a crucial role in their respective regions; they have complementing economies; and both can help bolster regional cooperation and maintain regional peace and security.

Given Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's stance against Western pressure and blackmail, Russia can create a strong bloc with interested Third World countries such as Iran in order to safeguard the interests of member states vis-a-vis US unilateral decisions in the international arena.

With the reappointment of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and most likely that of Foreign Minister Primakov, Russia's reforms will go ahead while distance from the West with a more independent foreign policy, stressing closer relations with the Third World and Asia will be on the anvil. [sentence as published]

Yeltsin's re-election is welcomed in Iran, for he has proved that Russia is serious in pursuing an independent foreign policy free from US pressure.

Over the past few years, Russia should have learned lessons from its relations with the US. The fact that 40 percent of the Russian electorate voted for a Communist indicates that almost half of Russia's population is dissatisfied with the Western impact on Russia.

An independent policy — foreign and domestic — will pay off both abroad and at home. Such a policy will befriend disenchanted Russian citizens, while boosting Russia's reliability among Third World countries who consider Russia a natural ally.

The ball is in Yeltsin's court. He has the mandate of those who voted for him and the demand for change of those who did not. Continuing the reforms will appease those who voted for him and distancing from the West, especially the US, will expand his popular base at home and boost Russia's relations with Third World countries.

Iran: Velayati, Pakistani Official Discuss Expansion of Ties

LD0807105696 Tehran IRNA in English 1034 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 8, IRNA — The expansion of Tehran-Islamabad ties were discussed in a meeting between visiting chief minister of Sindh Province of Pakistan Seyyed Abdullah Shah and Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati here Monday. [8 July]

During the meeting the two sides exchanged views on promotion of mutual cooperation in cultural field.

Velayati said that exchange of visits between the two countries' officials will have very positive impact on the growing trend of ties between Tehran and Islamabad.

He also voiced Iran's readiness to render any kind of assistance in the field of culture and Islamic arts to Islamabad.

Abdullah Shah is to visit holy Islamic sites in the cities of Mashhad and Qom. He intends to use Iranian architecture in the construction of a mausoleum for a prominent Pakistani lim, Shahbaz Qalamdar, who passed away recently.

Iran: Preparation To Face U.S. Threats Urged

96LH0210A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 9 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The anniversary of the United States severing its relations with Iran is 20 Farvardin [9 April]. Yesterday some publications dealt with this subject, discussing its various dimensions from different points of view.

This severing of relations must not be seen as just a historical event because the issues of the Islamic revolution and the United States not only remain a story as yet untold, but every day its dimensions increase, and the existence of the revolution faces new threats.

We are already seeing that every day America's approach to our revolution takes a new form, and this nation's investigative organizations have begun taking extensive measures to understand the country and ways to confront it.

The day the United States cut its ties with Iran, according to the documents in the spy nest, Washington had only the smallest understanding of the revolution, the structure of the government, the clergy of the people, and the relations between internal bodies. These issues were shrouded in ambiguity for America.

In those days and in the first years of the triumph of the Islamic revolution, the United States had only a tiny foothold among the forces who had come to power in the revolution. America was confused, dumbfounded, and astonished in an insane encounter with divine vengeance, and it cut off its relations with revolutionary Iran.

However, 16 years after the severing of relations, the question arises as to whether or not the U.S. understanding of us today is at the same level it was in the past. It appears that this is not the case.

Today those who write and have lost their culture, from the old-time companions of the cave to the Yarshaters, are serving in U.S. research centers to study against the Islamic revolution.

The CIA now has an inventory of information about the national officials, even their attributes and characteristics, and for us this is food for thought.

There is no doubt that no political, social, or cultural change in the country escapes America's notice, and in various ways it is seeking to influence the nation's political, economic, cultural, and social bodies.

In the years since the triumph of the revolution, as shown by the events of U.S. hostage-taking, a multitude of people enamored with the West have been employed as spies, and we still have not forgotten the arrest of 50 American spies.

Today the United States has its eyes on the changes in the country and is striving through the use of psychological and propaganda tools to give direction to these changes.

Today the number of voices being used to influence the spirit and soul of our youth and to promote and inculcate America's programs is countless.

On the one hand, under current conditions, every moment the United States squeezes tighter and tighter the ring of its presence around the borders of our country. At the same time, we are seeing an extensive presence by this country in the newly independent republics, the Caspian Sea, and even in Afghanistan with Taleban (!), along with the Zionist regime's presence as far as the Persian Gulf Emirates.

These instances have set off more alarms than before for our Islamic revolution.

The United States has not yet stopped taking measures against the revolution. It has begun its political and economic efforts to isolate Iran and to persuade Europe to follow.

All of these efforts show the complexity of the situation and America's serious confrontation with the Islamic revolution.

Today however, the question remains: what have we done to confront these measures?

How much research have we done to prepare the country materially and spiritually?

What is clear is that our prominent needs at this time in order to confront the United States are careful and extensive research, national resolve, coordinated action, capable management, proper use of the nation's spiritual and material resources, appropriate action in international affairs, the country's growth and development in all areas, security and intelligence alertness, national unity, and finally, obedience to the one who is at the helm in the government, the exalted leader.

Iran: Chirac Visit to Saudi Arabia — Effort To Replace U.S.

LD0807142196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 8 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] French President Jacques Chirac arrived in Saudi Arabia on 6 July to a warm welcome by King Fahd and other political and military officials. Chirac ended his visit today and left for Qatar.

Chirac was accompanied by the French ministers for foreign affairs, defense, economy, and the interior, as well as other political figures. This senior French delegation forwarded an indirect message of assurance to the Saudis that France could replace the United States in meeting Saudi requirements in politics, economics and security.

Indeed, political observers believe that the most important dimension of the visit was its political aspect. For some time now, Chirac has intended to strengthen French ties with Saudi Arabia in order to advance French policy in the Middle East. But the existence of some disagreements, including differences over the modification or continuation of economic sanctions against Iraq, have prevented the two counties from strengthening their relations.

Although these differences continue to exist, recent developments in the region, including efforts by the Arab summit to stand up to Zionist expansionism, and even more important, emerging disagreements between the United States and Saudi Arabia over anti-American operations, have overshadowed differences between France and Saudi Arabia and have given Chirac a suitable opportunity to visit.

From a French point of view, improving relations between Paris and Riyadh will further strengthen French ties with Beirut and Cairo thereby advancing French policy in the Middle East. This will also use the Saudi position in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council to further French interests in the region. It is in this context that one should analyse Chirac's message to the Amir of Kuwait from Saudi Arabia and also his visit to Qatar on Monday. [8 July]

One factor which has helped advance French policy in the region is the mutual interest of the Middle Eastern countries to strengthen their ties with Europe and, more accurately, to adjust the regional policies of Europe, in particular France, toward Middle East requirements. Furthermore, U.S. efforts to create economic barriers for Europeans and reduce the traditional European role in the economic and political calculations of the Middle East, have strengthened European motivations to have a greater presence in the region.

In the face of the increasingly serious danger of Zionist hegemony, Arab countries are using closer ties with Europe as a lever for modifying U.S. support for Tel Aviv.

This mutual trend, which began several years ago, will presently lead to the strengthening of ties between France and Saudi Arabia.

The only concern here is U.S. efforts to damage this process. The United States responded to Chirac's previous visit to Lebanon with an inhumane provocation resulting in the Zionist regime lauching an offensive against South Lebanon.

Now, it is not clear whether the United States will react cautiously to the strengthening of relations between France and Saudi Arabia or whether it will resort to its previous tactics.

Iran: Japan Makes Loan Conditional on Criticism of Terrorism

LD0807170496 Tehran SALAM in Persian 6 Jul 96 p 3

[Question and answer from the "Hello, Salam" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Question] What was the result of the visit to Iran of a Japanese delegation? Will the second instalment of a loan that Japan was going to grant to Iran be paid?

[Answer] Foreign Desk: After the fourth round of talks in Tehran between Iranian and Japanese deputy foreign ministers, the two sides refrained from making any official statements about the payment of a Japanese loan for the sum of 38,600 million yen to Iran for the construction of the Karun-4 hydroelectric power station, but the newspaper 'ASAHI JAPAN' [as published] wrote a piece about it on 13 June saying that the Japanese side had announced in the talks: "If you wish to present evidence and proof of non-involvement in terrorism, you must criticize terrorist groups. This issue will form the basis of the loan to be paid by our government." If this is the case, it is quite likely that the Japanese are under pressure, like the Europeans, from the United States to refrain from carrying out business with Iran. On the other hand, it seems as if what is meant by support for terrorism is Iran's support for the Islamic groups of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Islamic Jihad, and the like, in the region, which are, in the opinion of the Islamic Republic of Iran, struggling to attain their just rights — and there is a difference between their popular struggles and terrorism.

Iran: Aide Says Canada Opposes U.S. Sanctions Against Iran

LD0807114896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Canada has said that Ottawa and European countries supported the continuation of trade and a policy of dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran and would not follow the imposed American policies in this field.

The Canadian charge d'affaires in Tehran told our correspondent today that his country opposed any measure aimed at restricting trade and investment in the world and looked unfavorably at U.S. efforts to impose its wishes on others through coercion.

He added that should the United States give final authorization to secondary sanctions against Iran, his country would oppose it, would stand against it politically, and would pass retaliatory laws against Washington.

Iran: Azerbaijan Intelligence Chief on Spies

96LH0187A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 23 Mar 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] The General Director of Intelligence in West Azerbaijan announced: Last year seven spy networks operating for foreign countries were identified, and 29 of their agents were arrested.

In an interview with IRNA's political correspondent, he said: These spies were operating in return for the receipt of money. A quantity of antiques and sound and imaging equipment was also confiscated from them.

The Province of West Azerbaijan general director of intelligence added: In the year 1374 [21 March 1995 - 20 March 1996] a strike was conducted against three counterrevolutionary groups in the region and 23 counterrevolutionary elements and saboteurs with 87 sidearms and a quantity of ammunition were arrested.

With regard to narcotics smuggling, he said: Strikes were conducted against seven international smuggling networks in this province and more than 1,500 kg of morphine and opium was seized.

The Province of West Azerbaijan general director of intelligence added: A heavy stone statue weighing about 5 kg, 2 stone inscriptions, 40 stone bowls of various forms and weights, metal seals, dozens of coins, a sword, and metal containers and bowls from the first and second millennia BC are examples of the items seized in the effort to protect the nation's cultural heritage.

Experts from the Cultural Heritage Organization said the items seized date from the first and second millennia BC and estimated their monetary value at more than 200 million rials [R].

He discussed the smuggling of foreign exchange in the Province of West Azerbaijan. He said: Last year 124 members of seven foreign exchange smuggling networks were arrested in this province, and currencies in the amounts of $1,116,800, 349 Deutsche marks, and 2.4 billion Turkish lira were confiscated.

The Province of West Azerbaijan general director of intelligence added: Also confiscated from these individuals were 10 kg of pure gold in ingots, a quantity of counterfeit bills and cash, along with 28 passenger vehicles.

He said: In the year 1374 [21 March 1995 - 20 March 1996] in the Province of West Azerbaijan, 127 agents from 23 war and hunting weapons and ammunition smuggling networks were arrested and 704 hunting weapons, 1,318 light and heavy combat weapons, and also 12 vehicles which were being used in very complex ways to stash goods were found and seized.

At the end of this interview he discussed the discovery of livestock and merchandise smuggling networks. He said: During the year 1374, striking measures were taken to identify and arrest these agents. In this regard, more than 1,500 head of livestock and also smuggled and unauthorized goods were seized such as copper, various types of cloth, sugar, and other things valued at about R2 billion, and 109 smugglers of livestock and goods were arrested and turned over to the judicial authorities.

Iran: Foreign Ministry—Fundamental Stances on Egypt Unchanged

LD0807172596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Foreign Ministry has reiterated the fundamental stances of the Islamic Republic of Iran on relations with Egypt. He said: Our fundamental stances regarding Egypt have not changed. With every step that Egypt takes away from the Zionist regime it can be [more] optimistic about establishing ties with Iran.

Mr. Mohammadi described the Syrian diplomacy to strengthen the Arab-Islamic front against the hegemonic policies of the Zionist regime as sincere. He said the manner in which the Egyptian authorities treated that diplomacy was a regrettable attempt to cause the failure of Syria's diplomacy.

He referred to the concern in the Arab world about the new anti-Arab, anti-Islamic stances of Netanyahu.

He said: Iran's welcoming Syria's diplomacy, more than guaranteeing Iran's particular interests, helps to strengthen the position of the Arab world against the Zionist regime's excesses.

He added: Iran will host the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] summit in the future.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman Expresses Regret Over Egyptian Officials' Remarks

LD0807185796 Tehran IRNA in English
1756 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 8, IRNA — The foreign ministry spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mahmud Mohammadi, expressed regret over the remarks of Egyptian officials on Iran on Monday [8 July] describing the statements as 'Syria's reconciliatory diplomacy'. [as received]

Mohammadi termed the Egyptian officials approach on the Syrian diplomacy as a 'regrettable effort' aimed at crippling Syrian shuttle diplomatic efforts. He added that Syria's diplomacy for strengthening the united Islamic Arab front against the Zionist regime's expansionist policies as an honest effort.

The spokesman reiterated Iran's unchanged stance on the issue of relations with Egypt saying, 'our stand towards Egypt has not changed, and that evey step that Egypt takes to distance itself from the Zionist regime, it can then be hopeful of relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran'.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman made a reference in regard to Arab world's show of concern over the anti-Islamic and anti-Arabic stand of the newly elected Zionist Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Mohammadi stated that Iran welcomed Syrian diplomatic initiation only because it would have positively contributed to strengthening the Arab world stance against the surging and reviving Israeli expansionist and hegemonic policies in the region, rather than serving to secure specific interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mohammadi then referred to the participation of Imad Faluji, Palestinian telecommunication minister and a former member of the Islamic resistance group Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in a telecommunication conference in Tehran (July 8-11), saying that Faluji's presence at the conference in Tehran was within the framework of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) activities. He finally stated that OIC extended its invitation to Palestian self-rule entity because of the fact that Palestine is a member of OIC.

Mohammadi also announced that Iran will be hosting the summit meet of the OIC in a near future.

Iran: Source 'Surprised' at Egypt Turnaround on Syrian Mediation

MM0907125996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
9 Jul 96 p 4

[Report by Ghassan Bin-Jiddu: "Tehran Surprised by Egyptian Stand, Saying It Offends Syria More Than Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — An authoritative source in Tehran has expressed his surprise at the position adopted by President Husni Mubarak, who confirmed the Syrian mediation between Iran and Egypt. The Iranian source confirmed that Syria did indeed mediate between the two countries and that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' had informed Iranian circles of the Egyptian officials' welcome for the mediation and their willingness to sit with the Iranians at the negotiating table with a view to developing bilateral relations and discussing the possibility of restoring diplomatic relations. The source said that the Egyptian rejection "offends Syria more than Iran."

Until late evening yesterday no official Iranian comments had been made on the Egyptian president's statements, and the Iranian press has avoided making any reference to the issue, with the exception of the newspaper IRAN NEWS, which criticized in its editorial Cairo's rejection of the Syrian mediation. However, an authoritative official acquainted with the Arab-Iranian relations file has expressed to AL-HAYAH his surprise at Cairo's recent position. The source said: "We were surprised by the statements made by the Egyptian president and his political adviser (Dr. Usamah al-Baz), especially as the brothers in Damascus had stressed to us earlier the Egyptian circles' welcome for the Syrian mediation and the officials' willingness to improve Iranian-Egyptian relations." The source stressed that "indeed there was Syrian mediation between the two countries," and the Syrian foreign minister, who visited Tehran twice last week in the framework of Syrian mediation between Iran and Bahrain, discussed with the Iranians the Egyptian-Iranian relations issue. "And he heard responsible statements from decisionmaking circles in Tehran, especially from President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, welcoming the Syrian mediation and declaring Iran's willingness to improve relations with Cairo." The source added that "it was agreed in principle" for Damascus to host a subsequent Syrian-Egyptian-Iranian meeting at foreign minister level to also discuss practical ways of "developing relations at all levels and to discuss more than one political issue that concern the three countries and the region as a whole, especially in view of the emergence of several developments necessitating that efforts of the Islamic and Arab states be pooled in order to confront the dangers posed by these developments." The source said that "the Egyptian Government knows before anyone else that Iran has absolutely nothing to do with the armed groups. We officially announced previously our rejection of any terrorist operations targeting innocent people, whatever their source. And we stressed our disapproval of the armed groups' practices in Egypt." The authoritative source attributed the lack of any official Iranian comment on the recent Egyptian stand to the fact that the Iranian circles concerned "are awaiting clarifications and explanations from Damascus."

The source said that "the Egyptian rejection offends Syria more than Iran, especially as al-Shar' told the press after his meeting with Mubarak in Cairo a few days ago that he had encountered Egyptian responsiveness to and welcome for the mediation."

Iran: CIRO Head Addresses Conference on Islam-Europe Dialogue

LD0807121096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Jul 96 p 1, 4

["CIRO Head Underlines Cooperation Between Islam and Europe"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — In a message to the second conference on the dialogue between Islam and Europe, Head of the Culture and Islamic Relations Organization (CIRO), Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Taskhiri, underlined cooperation between Islam and Europe.

The 3-day conference on dialogue between Islam and Europe is being held in Oxford, Britain, under the title of "Conflict or Cooperation". It is the second one out of the projected 6 conferences on the dialogue between Islam and Europe.

The conference aims at obliterating misunderstandings between Islam and the West and reinforcement of bilateral relations and promotion of cooperation between the two great civilizations.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Education and Scientific Cooperation Organization (UNESCO), Federico Mayor, representatives from the European Union, US, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Morocco, Oman and Iran, and British university professors are to present the conference with lectures.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Taskhiri was to participate in the conference but he failed as the British embassy in Tehran refused to offer him with entry visa.

Contrary to Professor Samuel Huntingdon who maintains that present conflicts stem from cultural basis and that the clashes between civilizations is the advanced stage amongst the various kinds of historical conflicts and that differences between the contemporary civilizations is deep-rooted, Hojjat ol-Eslam Taskhiri said in his letter to the conference.

"The answer to the question adopted by the conference is cooperation and nothing else," he said, stressing that civilization is a complementary human products, which seeks to raise man happily. Therefore, the human civilization disappears it is because of its injustice, according to the Holy Koran, or its seclusion from the human process and keeping to itself.

Outlining the factors for keeping the ties between the Islamic and European civilizations, he called for cooperation between Islam and Europe.

Correcting the reciprocal views, moving toward realistic international cooperation, overcoming historical and psychological feelings, realizing religious and philosophical understandings, accepting supremacy of human beings, abandoning the feeling of superiority, strengthening cultural ties, balancing freedom, individualism and equality, adopting collective actions to safeguard the just causes such as Kashmir, Palestine and Bosnia, refusing to impose certain logic, the way the US acts will help further cooperation between Islam and Europe.

In his letter hojjat ol-Eslam Taskhiri outlined the positive grounds for enhancement of the cooperation between the two parties and said the decline of the former Soviet Union is one of the factors in this regard.

In conclusion, Hojjat ol-Eslam Taskhiri offered several proposals to the conference in a bid to pave the way for further cooperation between Islam and Europe.

Iran: Daily Criticizes U.S. Opposition to Nuclear Programs

LD0807122296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Jul 96 pp1, 14

[Editorial article: "US Opposed to Muslim Countries Having Nuclear Programmes]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — The US is opposed to the establishment of a nuclear power programme or efforts to achieve educational progress by Muslim countries, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Reza Amrollahi told the 'TEHRAN TIMES' recently.

Describing the Zionist regime as an agent of US interests, Amrollahi, also a deputy for the president, said that its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is not taken as a serious offence by Washington, unlike Pakistan and India whose refusal to sign is made a big issue.

Accusing Iran of attempting to build up a nuclear weapons programme, Amrollahi said the issue is again exploited by the US to tarnish the prestige of the Islamic Republic, as well as other Muslim countries around the world.

The White House works to suppress any gains made by these countries, he emphasized.

Asked about the reported nuclear power station being constructed in Bushehr, Amrollahi said an agreement was concluded with the German company Siemens but that implementation was suspended during the succeeding 12 years.

"Iran, in cooperation with Russia, has resumed the construction of the power station merely for peaceful purposes," he said.

Amrollahi further revealed that the first unit of the Bushehr nuclear power station will become operational by the end of the Second Five-Year Development Plan, saying it will then boost the country's electrical capacity to a total of 2,400 MW, sufficient to meet the country's total demand for electricity.

He also revealed that plans are underway for Iran to sell its share in the French factory involved in uranium enrichment.

Stressing the peaceful purposes behind Iran's nuclear programme, Amrollahi said the fact has repeatedly been attested to by officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Iran is one of the first signatories to the NPT and the agency ensures that the treaty is safeguarded and signatories fully comply with their responsibilities," he said.

Elaborating on the other peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the country, he said new applications may be found in modern medicine and agriculture which uses nuclear energy for therapy and for foodstuff suspected of contamination, respectively.

The AEOI chief referred to various research work now being fielded to find other natural energy sources which the organization hopes to use in meeting its other needs.

He cited the power stations in Manjil and Rudbar which avail of the energy produced by wind and the two solar-powered stations in separate villages in Yazd and Semnan provinces.

"Generating nuclear power, undertaking practical research, supplying fuel for nuclear power stations are the other activities of the AEOI which functions directly under the President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani," he said.

Iran: Navy Commander on Success of Falaq War Games

LD0807114996 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 4 Jul 96 p 1

[Editorial article: "Falaq Missile War Games Keeps Iran on the Ball"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran's Rear-Admiral Mohammad Karim Tavakkoli yesterday said the recent Falaq missile war games in the Persian Gulf were aimed at exploring emergency and defensive conditions.

Tavakkoli, commander of the First Naval Zone, told 'IRAN NEWS' that the naval forces took part in the games to improve their defensive capabilities and enhance their military muscle.

"The manoeuvres enable us to eradicate any problems gripping the Navy through better understanding of the shortcomings," he explained.

By the order of the Commander-in-Chief Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, Iran's military forces should always engage in repair and maintenance of facilities and retain their defensive capabilities, he said and added that the war games "were held in compliance with the Leader's orders."

Notwithstanding embargoes, economic restrictions, and bans on the sale of needed parts to Iran, the Islamic Republic Navy has safeguarded the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea on Oman, Tavakkoli stressed.

"Those who wished to eliminate the Navy from the Islamic Republic's armed forces failed in their attempts, and right now the Navy is more powerful than ever before."

The presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf has not contributed to the region's security, he said. "To the contrary, they have caused mounting insecurity and tension in the area."

Perhaps in the not-too-distant future the countries that invited the foreigners to the region would change their mind and assume their own responsibility in safeguarding their own coastal waters without relying on foreign troops, he said.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Navy is fully prepared to cooperate with interested regional countries in maintaining security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the rear-admiral stressed.

Iran's Navy can offer any kind of assistance required by these regional states, he concluded.

Iran: Former Rafsanjan Majles Deputy Defends Accusations

LD0707163396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 3 Jul 96 p 2

["Letter To SALAM: Former Majles Deputy From Rafsanjan Responds To Accusations Against Him"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To the honorable managing director of the SALAM newspaper, with greetings and for his information:

Accusations against me, raised during the review of my credentials in a closed session of the Majles, were published in your newspaper, of Thursday 27 July, issue No. 1461. It is necessary to inform you that I have replied to these accusations, verbally and in writing and with reference to documents. Could you please print this brief reply in your newspaper in accordance with the press law. Should it be necessary an extensive and documented answer is ready to be dispatched. These notes are not a criticism of the views of the Majles, but a reply to some of the issues discussed at the closed Majles session that were published in your newspaper.

1. While in prison between 1350 and 1352 [ending 20 March 1974], I never cooperated with the Savak or the Shah's regime. I was never pardoned. I endured my conviction to the very last day, and continued to fight the regime until the victory of the revolution. (Documents are available). My request for employment at the Housing Organization was a pretext for the struggle, and between the time that I was freed from prison and the victory of the revolution I was never employed in any government organization.

2. While in the Shah's prison in 1351, I left the Mojahedin Khalq Organization and have never had any relationship with any of their members except for antagonism. My clashes with this grouplet and their affiliates while I was governor general are well known.

3. My appointment as the governor general of Kerman Province by the provisional government was at a time when that government was appointed by the late Imam Khomeyni, to manage the affairs of the country and when people were obliged to support it.

4. The claims about arming Khans and bandits are a distortion of the truth. While the governor general of the Kerman Province, I employed several tribal leaders as honorary guards for the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps and the sacred order of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to maintain order and prevent them from joining separatist provocations in Baluchestan. These people had no record of felony and were a source of valuable service for the rule of law and order in the region, for which documents exist, and the policy of which continues to this day by relevant institutions.

5. I have never been a supporter of Madani, former governor general of Khuzestan Province, or Former President Banisadr and have never had any contact with either of them.

6. After the victory of the revolution, and while serving as the governor general of Kerman Province (as documented in a 11 April 1979 decree by the Revolutionary Council and decree No. 2071 of 8 May 1979, by the command of the Revolution's Guards Corps), I was the commander of the Corps and the head of the Corps' Command Council, and as indicated by a letter (No. 102-23-4950, of 11 October 1979) from the intelligence of the Corps of the central province I have always worked toward the consolidation of these organizations. The formation of the honorary unit of the Guards Corps was the very policy followed in the formation of the Basij. The unit was under the command of the Corps and in order to strengthen the Corps.

7. The alleged 50 "Brno" weapons were among the arms at the disposal of the honorary unit of the Guards Corps and some honorary guards, and they were all returned to the relevant institutions. Taking such measures were among the necessary responsibilities taken at a particularly critical period after the revolution and this continues in parts of the Kerman Province.

8. I was appointed the governor general of the Sistan-Baluchestan province, (by decree No. 9461-43001-1-2-23 of 8 January 1980), by His Excellency Hashemi-Rafsanjani, while his excellency was the minister of interior, and continued to serve at this post when His Excellency Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani was the minister of interior. The accusation that my appointment was a prelude to the "Nuzheh" coup [attempt] is a rascally slur, baseless and illogical.

9. While I was a judge at the Hague tribunal, it was maybe the only time that the United States lost at that court. The United States had the least success in the branch that I was serving. This is a definite matter as indicated in the 26 December 1987 report to the prime minister of the time, Mr. Musavi, and his letter of praise of 19 January 1988, No. 137014.

10. I have no legal debts to the state. Indeed, I have contributed over $100,000 from my salary while serving at The Hague. I have also given power of attorney to the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran at The Hague to transfer whatever foreign currency or property that I or members of my family might own abroad. If I truly owned anything to the public purse, legal action should

have been taken during the last nine years since I left my position at The Hague.

11. Furthermore, I have held various posts since the victory of the revolution. This is proof that the recent commotion has political roots and is related to the elections. Of course, I will respect the Majles decision regardless of the reasons behind it.

Blessed is the decree of God.

[signed] Hamid Bahrami Ahmadi.

Iran: Oil Production, Development Discussed

96LH0183A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 18 Mar 96 pp 1.2

[Report on interview with Engineer Alviri, secretary of the Supreme Trade Zones Council, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Engineer Alviri believes that we have two conflicting and contradictory destinies before us in the next 20 years: 1. a bright horizon of development such that all the manifestations of poverty and deprivation will be eliminated and Iran will be considered one of the world's leading nations; or 2. a dark horizon of deprivation and backwardness such that poverty and deprivation have expanded and thousands of the people in society are dying on the roadside because of malnutrition, no housing, and extensive unemployment.

The secretary of the Supreme Free Trade Zones Council believes the years 1370 - 1385 [21 March 1991 - 20 March 2007] will be a determining period for the Islamic Republic of Iran because the decisions made in these years will establish the country's future destiny. Any kind of ill considered or unskilled decision or reactionary approaches to domestic and foreign pressures will undoubtedly turn the country into another Bangladesh. On the other hand, making the best use of the nation's rich natural resources with appropriate manpower usage and making use of recognized international experience can completely change the nation's situation within two or three five-year plans.

In the nation's decisionmaking system, the Majles has the preferred position and, as the imam said, "the Majles is at the head of affairs." In other words, with its actions the Majles can determine one of the two aforementioned destines for Iran. A Majles that is made up of committed and capable deputies with a wide perspective and specialist skills will put a powerful and capable government to work, and by passing independent laws and making careful policy, it will employ all of the nation's resources to alleviate deprivation and create an ideal society.

In Alviri's view, it will be under these conditions that the nation's most important obstacles to development will be removed.

We ask Mr Alviri: What is the outlook for the nation's development, in view of the aforementioned considerations?

He said: To achieve development, we need several basic levers. One is the lever of production. We must show in the numbers and figures that gross production is growing acceptably.

The second lever is creating full employment; that is, the country must move in the direction of full employment. Of course along with full employment, serious attention must be given to utilization. Otherwise, increased employment will have no value.

The third lever for achieving development is increased non-oil exports. To raise the level of technology in the country and to avoid getting mired in the swamp of inflation and stagnation, we must establish a presence in international markets by exporting goods and services.

These levers cannot be provided unless we have national will available as basic support.

I have always emphasized that before economic development, we must think about political development. In other words, to achieve economic development we must achieve political development, and in this regard we must establish a greater role in decisionmaking for the people and the political parties and groups because political and economic development are interdependent.

We ask Eng. Alviri: In view of the fact that in the decade of the 80s in the Christian era the question of culture and its effects on development is being given serious attention by thoughtful people, in your view to what extent is the nation's cultural structure compatible with development?

Eng. Alviri: Unfortunately, in our country the culture of development is faced with two detaining factors. The first arises from the nation's political circumstances prior to the revolution. For long years our country was managed under a despotic dictatorship. This country has a long way to go towards achieving freedom and tolerating the ideas of others, and our thinking is not yet free of this habit.

The second factor that is damaging to the culture of development is the oil economy. The product of such an economy is a culture of laziness and indulgence, and in general this causes reduced utilization activity.

To reinforce the culture of development one must fight the two negative phenomena of accepting dictatorship and the oil economy, because in this way we will make the country into a hard-working society. We must accept the fact that after the year 1386 [21 March 2007 - 20 March 2008] we will have no more oil to export. We must therefore do basic thinking about production.

We ask him what steps must be taken to promote the culture of labor as an important implement to achieve production.

Eng. Alviri: Theoretically we have no problems with regard to the culture of labor and effort, because the religion of Islam puts labor at the level of worship. We must seek to implement the theory in this matter and the way to do that is to compile laws to reinforce this culture of labor. When we create conditions that are such that one person can make a telephone call and obtain millions of tumans, while another works from morning until night to make a minimum livelihood, clearly these factors will be damaging to the nation's culture of labor.

In my view, we must compile laws that promote respect for work and the worker. Then we will be able to say that we have helped reinforce the culture of labor in the country.

Iran: Prices, Pricing, Nature of Free Market Economy Discussed

NC0807061496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Jun 96 p 4

[First part of a two-part commentary by Dr. Habib Chini entitled "On Prices and Pricing"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prices are always an interesting topic for the people because they understand them and feel their impact, even though they may have no idea about the complicated views and formulas propounded to determine them. But the man on the street feels what is going on much better than any economist.

Yesterday a reader called to complain: "Why do you not write about price tags? In the past manufacturers used to print the price of their goods on the packaging. Why has this stopped?" We promised this reader we would reply. When I put the phone down I thought: There are so many things that should happen but do not.

In the past the manufacturer printed the price of his product on the package, not on the orders of the Punishment [Board] or the Consumer Protection Committee or the Market Regulation Staff, or any other committee or organization, but by following a commercial principle and out of a desire to tell people: "I am selling cheaply, at a price you can afford." But then price tags were introduced. Now we have both.

Price tags are not an imported idea. They are the outcome of inflation and a sign of unstable prices. When prices change every day — and that, in a free economy, where, even if everything is controlled, prices are freed up or regulated on the basis of supply and demand — a price printed on packaging is replaced by a price tag.

In European and North American department stores, in any country with a market economy, you see employees with pricing machines in their hands going around and changing prices on the basis of a daily price list. [passage omitted]

When prices must be affixed to goods for the customer to see, who can quote a higher price than his competitors? Of course, prices vary from small shop to big shop. But all these things are based on the market research carried out by each shop. For example, if a shop in a remote area raises the price of an item by 10 percent, the customer might prefer to buy rather than spend time and money on transport to go to a larger supermarket elsewhere. At the same time this acts as an incentive for someone to open up a shop in a remote area.

Finance ministers are happy that sellers can sell their products for more because both the value-added tax increases and the income tax paid by the shopkeeper at the end of the year rises. But the mechanism of a competitive market does not allow a seller to charge more than he should. [passage omitted]

In a market economy and in the free economy of supply and demand, the buyer is the master and it is he who can regulate prices by buying or not buying. But in a monopolistic or quasimonopolistic system, the sellers get together and become the masters of the market, because they constantly keep supplies lower than demand or regulate supplies in such a way as to enable them to benefit from the buyers as much as possible. [passage omitted]

Iran: Commentary Views Implications of Economic Strategies

NC0807070596 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 24 Jun 96 p 4

[Second and last part of a two-part commentary by Dr. Habib Chini entitled "On Prices and Pricing"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A freemarket mechanism in which production and supply are free is the best guarantee to keep prices down and to avoid discouraging increased production and fresh investment. Once these incentives are removed and no new investments are made, unemployment will rise fast and a shortage in production will inevitably upset the balance of prices and increase inflation. Under such conditions, increased imports will, in turn, threaten the domestic market; they will help to create job opportunities — or the just distribution of income — only for the exporting countries, not for the importing countries.

Looking at prices, we should always consider production and investment. Any extreme or unprincipled step will not only turn the economy issue into a social problem, with black-marketeering and other, resulting, corruption, but will also harm production and investment. These are extremely simple and familiar problems.

But since there are market forces there are also social forces. One of these social forces is the organizational force. When an organization is created for a specific objective and program and it branches out, jobs are created for some, and a new entity springs up, exactly like a child. When it is born it is not its mother or father but an independent person with guardians. An organization too adopts its own character and identity immediately after it is formed. Naturally its members do not want to lose their jobs or their income. And assuming that the government concludes that these organizations are neither effective nor working toward price reduction, and decides to dissolve them, do you think it can do so easily?

One reason for high prices is that some organizations are working in parallel and are creating difficulties, giving rise to dissatisfaction. Interesting is that in the problem of prices, what should be regarded as illegal is not only regarded as legal, but is also the major reason for high prices. You may be surprised. But the issue is very clear. A monopoly and quasimonopoly are the major causes of high prices and an unsatisfactory supply of goods. To understand this issue, consider these monopolies and quasimonopolies and the scale of their activities, their legal rights, their charters, and, sometimes, even their heads. The performance of free economies and of countries that have turned to a free economy in recent years should make officials think about creating an economy that encourages free competition, one in which production is based on increased personal incentives to improve the quality and prices of goods.

Iran: Rising Prices Bemoaned

96LH0211A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 8 Apr 96 pp 2,3

[FBIS Translated Text] As I got into one of these vehicles along the road from Revolution Square to Imam Hoseyn Square, as usual the passengers were bemoaning the fare increase. The driver had a look on his face as if he were pretending to be in the right and an air about him as if he were planning vengeance against these people. With a grimace, he gave them the reason for the fare increase. He said:

If the price of gasoline increases 30 percent, we also increase fares 30 percent. We were charging 40 tumans; now we charge 60 tumans.

I said: First, 30 percent of 40 tumans is 12 tumans; you are forcing the other 8. Second, how many liters of gasoline do you burn per day?

Thirty liters.

Thus, by this account you are only paying 90 tumans extra per day. How many passengers do you get per day?

At least 100.

And you take 20 tumans extra from each one, which makes 2,000 tumans.

If this is not theft, if this is not against religious law, then what is? Who will answer these people? Who must put an end to these malfunctions and control these kinds of social abnormalities?

This story is also repeated in other areas. Today most of the merchants and owners of goods do whatever they want to do on the pretext of the gasoline price increase, and they cut as far into the flesh of the people as their blades will go. It makes no difference to them. It is as if it is a chess game in which they must make a move every time the government moves. They do so, and they are merciless and severe. In the midst of this, the class of people receiving a fixed salary each month suddenly realizes that its buying power has decreased several times over. Truly, what is the solution? How long can one continue to eat 400-tuman tomatoes and 200-tuman potatoes and pay such high fares?

Not having is not a vague term that requires a conference to establish a definition. This class of people is not just vulnerable, it is damaged. It will no longer be able to eat twice a day. Cheese at 1,000 tumans per kg and bread at 10 tumans is hard to swallow. Older people, those who were weaker, used to fill their stomachs with broth and were considered oppressed people, but now meat at 1,300 tumans per kg will not even suffice for that. If the toiling government were able to take this huge amount of money ($13 billion per year) that it spends to procure cheap fuel for the benefit of automobile owners (!) away from them and spend it to ease the long-standing pains of the vulnerable classes, this would be very good and acceptable. However, quitting the game in the middle and leaving the way open for them will be damaging to wage earners.

It is as if in our country it is customary for everyone to drive his own automobile without paying for it. Even the advanced European countries do not have such expectations. Even in those countries, a person who owns a private automobile uses it once in a while for certain occasions because the cost of using a private automobile is very high. Most of them turn to public transportation. If the government of the Islamic Republic were to follow this tendency to its logical conclusion for the sake of expanding social justice, it would get us nowhere. If the culture of using private automobiles were to mature for these people, many problems would be solved.

An increase in the price of gasoline means that many will be unable to pay the costs of owning an automobile. Every person will no longer be able to buy and use a private automobile. As the result of the reduced number of automobiles in the city, the people will turn to the Vahed Bus Company. When this bus system is reinforced, it will be able to serve the people. Moreover, problems such as traffic and air pollution will also be reduced significantly. However, we must mention again that this depends on the government helping the people, with careful supervision and by restraining the profiteers and opportunists who suck the blood of the people and cause false price increases in other areas. Those people are just trying to exacerbate the problems while portraying the government as being the one at fault and the only one who is doing anything wrong. The matter must be viewed logically; public opinion must be enlightened on this and false confusion must be prevented.

In any case, it is hoped that the government will be able to work to spread social justice without being influenced by all the bad propaganda and false confusion, and make redoubled efforts to control the malfunctions in other areas, God willing.

Indeed, God is with those who are patient.

Iran: University Teachers Respond to Minister

LD0707153696 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 3 Jul 96 pp 1, 3

[Criticism of Higher Education Minister: "Dear Minister! Inefficient Lecturers and Students are Fruits of This Educational Establishment"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following the remarks made by the minister of culture and higher education saying that the country's graduates are not fit to be employed by official organizations and that lecturers are not competent in applied sciences, a group of university lecturers and students reacted to the remarks by calling for a review of the shortcomings in the higher educational establishment and their elimination. They also called on the officials to pay more attention to the allocation of funds and resources for research and to the use of findings in scientific and applied research.

In an interview with an AKHBAR correspondent, these lecturers added: Lecturers who have studied within the country as well as the present graduates are the fruits of this educational establishment and the remarks made by the minister were in fact criticizing the incorrect policies of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

According to the same report, a number of lecturers from various educational departments at the Islamic Azad University [Daneshgah-e Azad-e Eslami] and other nationwide universities addressed the minister of culture and higher education, Mr. Hashemi-Golpayegani, stressing that the lack of appropriate conditions and climate and of financial backing and basic support for policy makers at universities have made it difficult or impossible to carry out any scientific or practical research, and that many researchers have given up their work because of the lack of motivation.

A lecturer from the Physics Department of Azad University said: Carrying out research work is impossible, both for lecturers and students, because of shortages of laboratory and workshop equipment and resources. The relevant officials, for their part, procrastinate over the provision of such facilities.

He referred to remarks made by the first vice president about allocating and paying 15 percent of the research budget for [government] offices to universities and said: The lack of enthusiasm shown by some university and government centers — and even industries — regarding research projects has meant that no deep link has been forged between the country's universities and industry.

He said: Higher education officials and policy makers claim that lecturers do not have a good command of practical sciences and can only solve problems in classrooms, whereas, up to now, many research projects undertaken by lecturers and researchers in various fields, especially technical ones, have been abandoned half finished or have met with indifference from industrialists, because of questions of personal taste and because of the fact that who you know is more important than what you know.

One lecturer, who did not wish to be named, said the following about the remarks made by the minister of higher education: What useful work did the minister do himself during the few years that he was a member of the academic staff of Amir Kabir University which makes him expect so much from lecturers and students now — in view of the current problems and shortages of resources facing universities.

He added: Many lecturers carrying out research at universities have lost the motivation to study because the results of their research and even their expertise is not used in policy making or planning, and they can find themselves just repeating the same lessons in their classes.

Some time ago, Dr. Mohammad Reza Hashemi-Golpayegani, the minister of culture and higher education, said in a speech at the college of agriculture in Karaj: "Unfortunately, the country's university lecturers can only solve problems in classrooms and do not have a good command of practical sciences." He also spoke of university students as people who cannot become useful elements in government organs after four years of studying, because of the lack of any experience in research and practical activities.

A lecturer in the field of metallurgy at Sharif Industrial University said: One of the shortcomings of the university education system is the lack of correspondence between technical fields and the society's requirements — or even the requirements of industry. In this educational system, the student does not gain sufficient experience in using laboratory equipment and does not become acquainted with research and scientific investigation in a rigorous way. It is, therefore, natural that, on entering society and the working environment of various organizations, graduates meet with dissatisfaction from their employers and no educated person finds their true place or plays an adequate role.

"Ehsan Radmand," a fourth-year engineering student who is also a member of the managerial board at the Semnan glass factory, says: Industry must accept that it is not possible to make progress through traditional practices. In contrast to the apathy of industry in attracting fresh and educated forces, the universities must prepare the ground for the employment of graduates in industry. This will allow graduates to put into practice what they have learned and to help greater productivity and better quality.

He adds: In the existing system, higher education is similar to that of the secondary schools where talented students cannot carry out scientific research and meet the requirements of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education. Our universities are only capable of delivering a large number of engineers who are inexperienced and do not understand social needs.

"Afsaneh Moradi," a chemistry student at Azad University, says: The educational order, in the state and Azad universities, is not establishing any bridges between the university and the job market. There is a shortage of laboratory facilities and a thousand other problems. Although the students pay high fees, they cannot use the laboratories freely.

"Shadi Mirza'i," who is also a student at Azad University, says that the greatest proportion of the university budget is spent on ceremonies and non-educational programs and not on the improvement of the educational system which could strengthen the scientific understanding of the students. If there were proper planning, it would be possible to employ many capable and enthusiastic lecturers. [passage omitted]

Iran: BBC's 'Propaganda' on Zoroastrian Congress Criticized

NC0807093396 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 16 Jun 96 pp 1, 11

[Unattributed commentary: "The World Congress of Zoroastrians and Spiteful Implications by the West's News-Political Circles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This week the followers of Zoroastrianism, the religion of ancient Iran, held their first world congress since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. This gathering was attended by about 700 representatives of the Zoroastrians from various countries, namely India, Canada, America, and some other countries, who discussed plans on how to safeguard and to strengthen their religion and its followers worldwide.

Some political-news circles were surprised that the congress was held in Iran. Because of spiteful propaganda by the Western mass media, many people believed the Islamic government of Iran would never allow the followers of a religion that was the religion of ancient Iran, before Islam, to organize such a congress.

The convening of this congress in Iran and the free discussions and exchanges of views among the leaders of this religion on how to strengthen their position is a clear answer to the demagogic and spiteful propaganda by the West's political and news circles. These circles have always insisted on showing that the Islamic government of Iran cannot tolerate the minority religions in the country and that, therefore, the followers of these religions are under pressure. The realities of life in Iran have proven how wrong this propaganda is, and the leaders of minority religions have repeatedly thanked the Iranian Government for assisting them. But the West's propaganda circles insist on pursuing their spiteful objectives and spreading their lies.

This time the West's mass media tried to overshadow the Zoroastrian congress in Tehran with its propaganda.

In relation with this a BBC correspondent, interviewing the head of the world congress, slyly tried to force him to imply that the Zoroastrians in Iran are under pressure and being intimidated and that it was years of pressure on the Iranian Government that won consent to hold the congress. But while explicitly stating that this was an erroneous approach toward Iran, the head of the World Congress of Zoroastrians explained that the Iranian Government had immediately agreed to the Zoroastrian community's request.

Mahyar Ardeshir, the head of the World Congress of Zoroastrians, told the BBC correspondent in his interview: "Since you are living abroad, you do not know that the propaganda against Iran on religious minorities does not apply inside Iran. The atmosphere that rules in Iran is different from what is portrayed outside." On gaining the Iranian Government's permission for the congress, he said: "After the elections for the fifth term of the Majles, our deputy and head of the Zoroastrian community decided to hold the World Congress of Zoroastrians in Iran. We are very happy that government officials very generously welcomed our request. The world's Zoroastrian communities were very happy to hear this news. Iranian officials have cooperated with us in every way. So I should tell you that the propaganda heard outside the country is untrue."

Pakistan

Pakistan: Senate Discusses 'Incident' at U.S. Embassy Reception

BK0707143496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Senate was informed today that the Foreign Office is in touch with the U.S. Embassy in connection with the disrespectful attitude shown to the chairman of Senate, Mr. Wasim Sajjad, by American security staff on the occasion of U.S. national day reception in Islamabad on Thursday [4 July] last. The issue was raised by the leader of the opposition, Raja Mohammad Zaffarul Haq, through a point of order and a number of opposition members who spoke on the matter condemned the incident. They said it amounted to insult to the entire nation as Mr. Wasim Sajjad was invited by the embassy as chief guest to represent the Government of Pakistan.

The minister of state for law, Mian Raza Rabbani, said the government did not take the unfortunate incident lightly and the foreign secretary took it up with the U.S. ambassador immediately after its occurrence. He said the government holds the chairman of Senate in high esteem and is fully alive to its responsibility to ensure the preservation of the honor of the dignitaries as well as citizens vis-a-vis foreign missions.

In his brief remarks, Mr. Wasim Sajjad hoped that a procedure will be laid own to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

Pakistan: U.S. Embassy's 'Misbehavior' With Senate Chairman Condemned

BK0707153396 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 7 Jul 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Misbehavior With the Senate Chairman — the Pakistani Government's Responsibility"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman of the Pakistani Foreign Office said that no decision has yet been made by the Foreign Office or the Government of Pakistan as to what step be taken over the misbehavior with Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad at the U.S. Embassy-organized function in Islamabad on 4 July to mark the United States' Independence Day. It should be mentioned here that when Wasim Sajjad arrived at the embassy to attend the function his vehicle was thoroughly checked and cleared by the U.S. security staff. When entering the gate, however, it was once again demanded that his car be inspected. They specifically wanted to inspect certain parts of his vehicle. Wasim Sajjad justifiably expressed his displeasure over the unfortunate behavior shown to him and did not attend the function in protest, instead returning to the Senate where he presided over the session.

Sajjad was invited by the U.S. Embassy as a special guest. According to protocol, he ranks second in Pakistan. He is the acting president during the president's absence. The treatment meted out to him is unfortunate. Worse is that although 48 hours have passed since the incident, as of the time of writing this editorial no report has been received that the U.S. ambassador or his office has offered an apology regarding Sajjad's treatment. It is said that the U.S. Embassy received a telephone call prompting its personnel to take these extraordinary precautions. Even if that is true, it does not justify the way the Senate chairman was treated.

U.S. diplomats are our guests and they have every right to take security measures during their functions; however, there are certain procedures and there are some manners that need to be observed. Positions of prominent personalities demand that they be treated with respect and not treated as ordinary people. It is well-known among the Pakistanis that U.S. diplomats consider themselves to be superior to others in Pakistan and expect preferential treatment compared to other diplomats. Unfortunately, many former Pakistani rulers have treated U.S. diplomats with more than the generally practiced diplomatic norms, and, as a result, U.S. diplomats are inclined to unhesitatingly ignore the status of even very high Pakistani figures — a glaring, but unfortunate example of which is the 4 July incident.

Surprisingly, the U.S. Embassy has not felt the need to apologize over the behavior of its staff, nor has the Pakistani Foreign Office made a decision as to when and how to take notice of the incident. Circles that are well-versed in diplomatic norms feel that the Government of Pakistan should demand an apology from the U.S. Embassy, ie-the U.S. Government, over the incident and express its displeasure and concern by summoning the U.S. ambassador to the Foreign Office. If the U.S. Embassy acknowledges that the treatment given to the Senate chairman by its personnel was inappropriate, then it must take disciplinary action against those involved in the misbehavior.

The incumbent U.S. ambassador is considered a good friend of Pakistan. He spent some of his childhood and student life in Karachi. After arriving in Pakistan, he went to Karachi specifically to visit the organizations and areas to which he was attached in his earlier days and where he spent a number of days and nights. Unfortunately, while talking to newsmen recently, the U.S. ambassador crossed the line by saying that if Pakistanis were unhappy with the behavior of the U.S. Government in any respect they were free to find a new friend. Some spokesmen of the Pakistani Foreign Office then said that the present ambassador was a very good friend of Pakistan and that he was also a very polite person and would never make such a comment. The U.S. ambassador, however, did not refute the statement. In other words, he stuck to his words. The Government of Pakistan did not express any kind of reaction, not even the slightest one.

If the incident of misbehavior with Wasim Sajjad is ignored and forgotten, and if the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Government are not told of our concern and displeasure, then the mistake will not be rectified. This would be a tragedy as it would confirm the apprehension that in the future the U.S. Embassy could again disregard the status of prominent Pakistanis. Unfortunately, most Pakistani politicians are ready to go to any extent to please the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Government and most of the time they behave in a manner that injures national dignity and self-respect. Probably, this is why the United States is behaving so with us, and does not see any need to take our feelings into consideration. We hope that the Foreign Office will take serious notice of the 4 July incident and adopt a strategy to restore national dignity.

Pakistan: Bhutto Speaks on Pressler Amendment, Azad Kashmir Polls

BK0307152296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said her government is pursuing a policy of balanced developmental activities in the country in order to provide basic amenities to the people at their doorsteps. She was speaking while inaugurating gas supply scheme in Chichavatani today. For details, we take you to our Lahore newsroom.

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] The prime minister formally inaugurated supply of Sui gas to Chichavatani. A 15 km long high pressure transmission line has been laid from Mianchunnu to Chichavatani for the purpose costing about 175 million rupees. Under the project, 30 km long distribution line has been laid for supply gas to the area. Five thousand, two hundred, and fifty gas connections will be given to the residents of the area thus benefiting 1 lakh people of the area.

Addressing a big gathering, the prime minister said that in the Multan region alone, Sui gas has been provided to the residents of D.G. Khan, Khangarh, Qadirpur, Rawan, Sarai, Sidhu, Tonsa Sharif, Mianchunnu, and Chichavatani region in a short span of 30 months and work is also in progress to providing gas to various other cities and villages. The prime minister said it is almost 50 years since independence, but we could not achieve progress because of martial law. She said that the dictators worked only for their personal interests while we firmly believe in the service of the people. She said that end of terrorism in Karachi and restoration of peace there is the defeat of antistate elements.

Talking about elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the prime minister said the election result has made it clear to India that the Kashmiri people fully support All Parties Hurriyat Conference and they are not prepared to bow down before the Indian oppression and tyranny. The prime minister also referred to various achievements of the government, including withdrawal of restrictions under Pressler Amendment as a result of which Pakistan has received $150 million and will soon get armaments to meet its defense requirements. Further, our talks with international leaders paved way for restoration of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. [end recording]

Pakistan: Army Decides To Make Defense Deals More Transparent

BK0807153696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 7 Jul 96 pp 1, 11

[Article by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad July 6 — In a move to ensure greater transparency and inspire public confidence in defence deals, the Pakistan Army has decided to involve the public representatives in pre-purchase technical and financial briefing on the Main Battle Tank which the army intends to buy from Ukraine at a competitive price, credible military sources told THE MUSLIM.

Acting on the directive of the COAS [Chief of Army Staff] General Jehangir Karamat, the Pakistan Army has decided to go ahead to finalise deals for the procurement of MBT T-80UD from firms of the Republic of Ukraine by involving the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of National Assembly, as well as the two Defence Committees of the upper and the lower houses before formally signing the contract.

The three committees will be given intensive briefings on the technical and price related aspects of the tank deal.

The philosophy behind the move is to allay fears of hanky panky in the defence deals. In the recent past a flurry of controversies surrounded two PAF [Pakistan Air Force] deals regarding the purchase of 40 old Mirage ills allegedly involving kickbacks to the tune of 20 million US dollars and the deal related to the acquisition of state-of-the-art Mirage 2000-5s involving even greater kickbacks.

Similar fears were publicly expressed on the procurement of submarines, mine hunters and Type-21 frigates by the Navy.

Though belated, the bewildered PAF did try to come off clean by giving a post purchase briefing to the Defence Committee of the National Assembly. This, however, did not help as all the members issued conflicting statements after the briefing.

According to well informed military sources, the request from the army side to brief the public representatives has been communicated to the government. It, however could not be ascertained as to when the government intends to arrange these meetings.

"The Pakistan Army is no hurry to conclude the tank deal for which it has waited for almost one decade," said a competent source, negating that Pakistan Army wants to conclude the deal hurriedly and that the contract is to be signed very soon. He said on the contrary the negotiations with various Ukraine firms are still open so that a better and a cheap deal could be brokered.

Pakistan Army, according to these sources, has been evaluating the Ukrainian tank for more than two years and the tank has covered about 20,000 kilometers of all weather trails in the country. "After evaluating about four different tanks, Pakistan Army has conveyed to the defence procurement agency that MBT T-80UD of Ukraine fits into its specifications and service requirements and it is wrong to presume that Pakistan Army has made the deal a single source procurement," said military sources.

Sources said the COAS has directed the procurement agency that whichever source from the Republic of Ukraine offers a better pricing structure and meets the technical requirements of the service may be chosen for the award of the contract. The most stringent condition put by the Pakistan Army is that the deal must be on the state to state basis for the smooth follow up supplies of spares and foolproof logistic support in future.

MBT T-80UD is developed by Kharkar Machine Building Design Bureau and is armed with 125mm gun which is fed by automatic loader. It fires conventional ammunition as well as a laser guided projectile to a range of 500km. The tank has 12006p model 6TD diesel engine, giving a maximum road speed of 60km and a range of 500 km. The tank also has a considerable increase in battle field survivability as it is fitted with explosive reactive armour that gives protection against kinetic energy and chemical energy attack. It is also fitted with Shotra-I vehicle protection system which can decoy away incoming anti-tank guided missiles.

The other serious buyer of the 7-80UD is perhaps the United Arab Emirates who instead of Giat Leclerc tank is contemplating to buy 100 T-80US from Russia. The Russian T-80 U and Ukraine T-80UD are of the same configuration, is the latest version to enter production. This tank differs from its Western competitors by way of its small size. The price quoted often in the international market is around 2.2 million US dollars per copy and it is believed that Pakistan is getting an excellent package deal from Ukraine with about 300 pieces for around 500 million US dollars. This also includes the TOT (transfer of technology).

The only apprehension expressed by experts about the Ukrainian deal is about the ammunition to be used for the 125mm gun. One of the major reasons to abandon the Polish tank deal was that the Polish ammunition that was to accompany the tank was not up to Pakistan Army's requirement. Pakistan Army requires the 125mm with the penetrating width of NATO standards.

Pakistan looks for TOT in the propellant quality of the dart which uses kinetic energy.

Though the fire power delivery is supplemented by an automatic fire control system with secure voice and digital communication capabilities but it is the accuracy and penetration of ammunition that will matter in the T-80UDs war time performance.

Pakistan has so far tried Chinese, Polish and Ukrainian 125mm ammunition but none of these has met the quality control of Pakistan Army. In past some ammunition was procured by Pakistan Army for 125 mm gun for Ukraine but the whole consignment was found to be below quality. As has been reported by the defence sources Pakistan Army has expressed satisfaction about the performance of 125mm ammunition for the T-80 UDs, it is believed the deal will accompany the TOT so this ammunition may be fabricated in POF [Pakistan Ordnance Factory] Wah which has excellent infrastructure and has been producing this calibre ammunition for its-existing guns and howitzers.

Military sources, responding to THE MUSLIM's query over the whispering campaign about the involvement of Col (Retd) Mahmood ul-Hassan, a defence representative in the Ukrainian tank deal, said the credibility of such reports could be gauged from the fact that the deal is being conducted on government to-government basis which leaves no room for any middleman and kickbacks.

Sources pointed out that the retired colonel who is being dubbed as a very close friend of the COAS has been in the defence business for the last 30 years, much before anybody could anticipate that General Jehangir Karamat will become the COAS.

He stressed that in government-to-government deals only a liaison office of the manufacturer operates in the country to facilitate the visits and he has nothing to do with technical or financial negotiations which take place between the experts of the two governments.

Pakistan: Jamaat-i-Islami Activists Rally Against Corruption

BK0307145896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Workers of Jamaat-i-Islami took out processions and held rallies and sit-in's in different cities against the alleged corruption and criticized government policies, including price hike. In Rawalpindi, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group joined the Jamaat-i-Islami. A rally was held in Karachi which marched through some areas and later went to Bagh-i-Qaid-i-Azam where the participants were addressed by the Jamaat-i-Islami leaders. Participants of a rally in Karachi were dispersed peacefully after a sit-in in front of the chief minister's house. Earlier, a delegation of the Jamaat had called on the chief minister, Syed Abdullah Shah, and assured him to remain peaceful. In Lahore, the Jamaat-i-Islami workers gathered outside Lahore high court. They carried banners and placards raising antigovernment slogans. In Peshawar, different processions converged in front of the Governor's House. They dispersed peacefully after the address of some leaders. Reports about rallies have also been received from other towns.

Pakistan: Minister Calls Jamaat-i-Islami 'Terrorist Party'

BK0407153696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the opening day of the 67th session of the Senate today, the minister of state for law and justice, Mian Raza Rabbani, told the house that Jamaat-i-Islami has always been a terrorist party, which had opposed the creation of Pakistan. The minister said later the party adopted antidemocratic measures and now it is busy in agitation to install an unelected government in the country.

Responding to an adjournment motion moved by the amir [chief], Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, and others, Mian Raza Rabbani said even after obtaining lowest number of votes during 1993 general elections, Jamaat-i-Islami has adopted all methods of violence, agitation, and acts of terrorism to dislodge an elected government, which is functioning in accordance with the constitution and federal parliamentary system. Mian Raza Rabbani said now when democracy is taking root in the society, the majority of people in Pakistan have rejected the fascist methods of Jamaat-i-Islami and this was the reason that the people were not mobilized by calls given by the leadership of Jamaat-i-Islami. He said during last month's agitation, the Jamaat-i-Islami had, in fact, plans to paralyze national life through acts of violence.

Earlier, speaking on the motion, Amir Jamaat-i-Islami Qazi Hussain Ahmad had leveled the accusation that the government had used strong tactics to deal with its agitation, which was meant against the price hike. He had accused the government of airing false news items through Pakistan Television's news bulletins.

Responding to this accusation, federal minister for information and broadcasting, Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, said the PTV presented factual position and the hard tactics of Jamaat-i-Islami workers pelting stones on railway bogies and firing on policemen can be reexamined by the house through the footage of television news.

Speaking on the motion, Senator Abdur Rahim Mandukhel from Pakhtun Khwa Milli Awami Party criticized the government for heavy taxation in the budget, but he opposed the Jamaat-i-Islami's idea of establishing a caretaker government. Senator Jahangir Badar was speaking on the motion when the house was adjourned to meet again on Sunday [7 July] evening.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: President Pledges To Restore Complete Peace by Next Year

BK0807131296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga yesterday pledged to end the Northeast war and restore complete peace in the country by the end of next year. She said the government has achieved a number of creditable military victories within a short period and presented a political package with the aim of solving the ethnic problem. She said that the government would address grievances of the Tamil people and ensure that no injustice is done to them.

The president stressed that the government is committed to continue development programs despite the war in the Northeast. In this context, the government has identified power generation as a priority sector and has already made arrangements to set up additional power plants that use sources other than hydropower. Mrs. Kumaratunga said that the government plans to provide 300,000 telephone lines next year and streamline the postal services using the latest technology. The president said that action is also being taken to develop all three main ports. Foreign investors have expressed their interest in developing the Colombo Port at the cost of $700 million. A massive development project is underway at the Galle harbor.

Sri Lanka: Prime Minister Reaffirms Adherence to Devolution Proposals

BK0707130996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government will never stand for the division of Sri Lanka or will never let the unity, territorial integrity or sovereignty of the country or its people be compromised. In a special statement to the nation on the government's peace plan, Prime Minister Srimavo Bandaranaike has said that the devolution proposals contain many safeguards to ensure this. The prime minister said that the government was completely open and honest as to its intention. The government's devolution proposals are now being debated by the representatives of the people in the parliamentary select committee on the Constitution. The views of the people have been sought and considered. The government will continue to pay heed to the people who have entrusted the government with the administration of the nation.

Mrs. Bandaranaike said that the trust of the people would never be betrayed. The prime minister further said that the government is fighting the northeast war not to dominate any section of Sri Lankan population. The lessons of history have taught that military victory over insurgency, terrorism, and militancy will never be a final solution; however, she said armed insurrection against the legitimate democratically elected government must be defeated. Mrs. Bandaranaike has assured the people that the government has set Sri Lanka on a path that leads to peace and a brighter future for all. She said that a new Sri Lanka should be built where there should be no place for hatred, anger, vengefulness, suspicion or rancor. The prime minister appealed to the nation to unite to bequeath to the future generation a country that will be the pride of all Sri Lankans and the envy of the whole world.

Sri Lanka: Police Team Collects Clues to Jaffna Blast

BK0807134596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A top flight police team now probing last Thursday's [4 July] bomb blast in Jaffna in which Minister Nimal S. de Silva was injured and 23 others killed are working on vital evidence collected from the wounded and other sources. Officials of the government's Analyst Department's, Explosives Division, are now back in Colombo after collecting the relevant data from the scene of the bomb explosion at Stanley Road in Jaffna. The team was assigned by government analyst, Mrs. (N. Mahesa). The two officials are due to hand in their report to the government analyst. The team had been assigned on request by senior DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police], Mr. (Arya Sinha).

Meanwhile, the Tigers continue to escalate violence and terror campaigns in (Arkelai) in Jaffna. The Tigers on Saturday [6 July] killed the assistant government agent, [word indistinct] Ramalingam, and his accountant with gunshot injuries at the Jaffna Hospital yesterday. [sentence as heard] Investigations revealed that it was

Mr. Ramalingam who hoisted the Jaffna District flag following the Riviresa Operation victory in the North.

In a major search operation launched following Thursday's LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] suicide attack in Jaffna, the Army seized a stock of explosives, ammunition, and hand grenades from a location in the Valikamam sector. Army Commander Lieutenant General Rohan Daluwatte said that there were various different kinds of explosives in the haul recovered by the troops. He said that the lethal cargo was concealed in different hideouts in the Valikamam region. He declined to name the area where the explosives were found hidden. He said that the civilians in Jaffna are assisting the security forces by providing vital information about clandestine LTTE activities in the peninsula. The Army has requested the civilians to be vigilant and inform the security forces of any suspicious activities within their precincts.

Government has made a budgetary allocation of three billion rupees for assistance to the displaced persons in the North and other areas. With this amount, (?2.5) billion rupees is being spent. This disclosure was made by the minister of shipping, posts, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and commissioner general of essential services in an interview with the state radio today. There are 1.3 million people living mostly in welfare camps and with relatives. The minister described the situation at present in the Jaffna peninsula as normal. The World Food Program is assisting 55,000 persons outside the North and the East. He described the relations between the armed forces and the civilian population as excellent. The CWE [Cooperative Wholesale Establishment] and private parties are involved in transportation, and India has promised assistance by way of food and essential items.

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